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ABSOLUTE UNDERGROUND

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Vol. 17 - #3 - Issue 99 - April / May 2021

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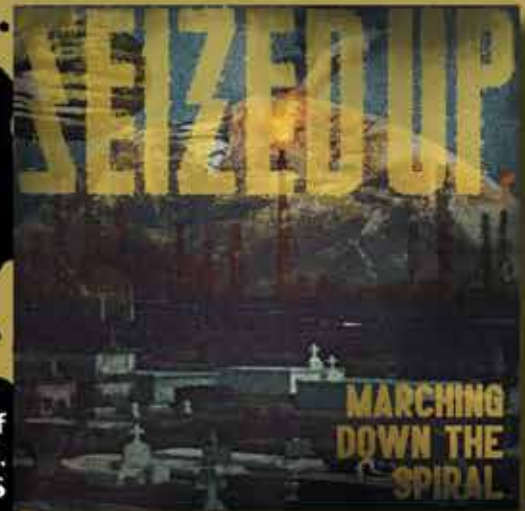
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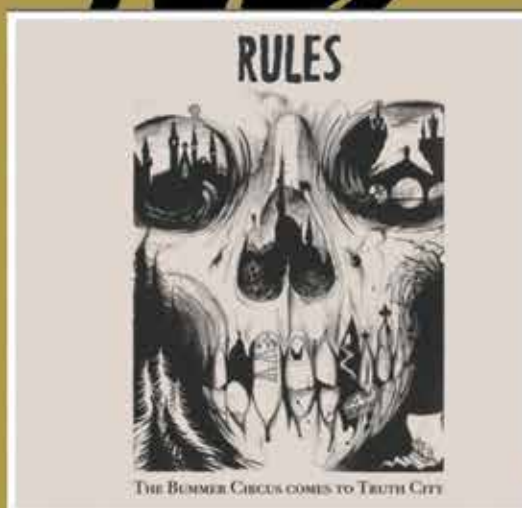


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throughout Vancouver Island, the Lower Mainland, Alberta, Toronto and
Seattle. The reader must understand that all information given is from
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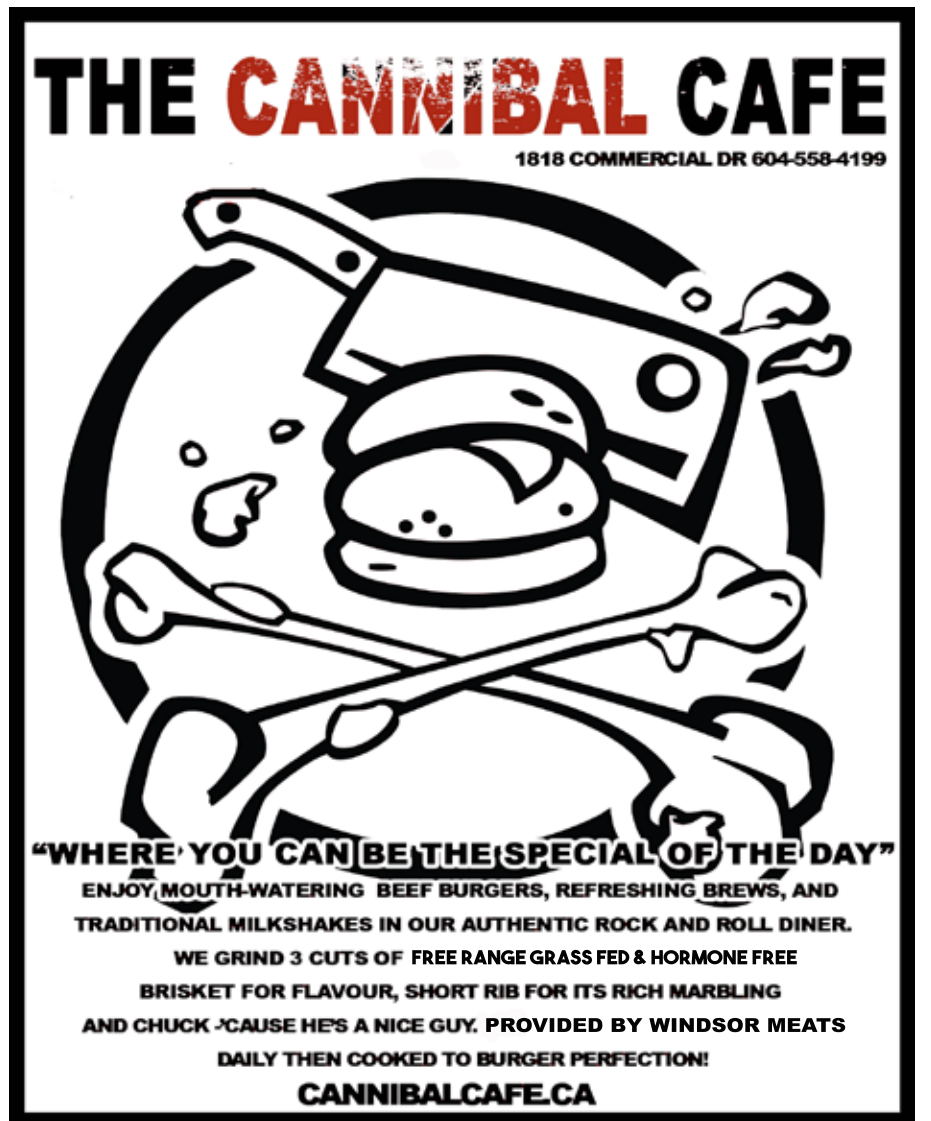
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singles in 2020 and 2021.

With a base of NY punk and SoCal skate of the 90s, VCR delivered a mix of "all styles" of punk with rapid, high voltage tracks. Early influences include The Ramones, Rancid, Anti Flag, Briefs, Pears, Descendants, NOFX and The Misfits. The fury in their songs speaks to how the band views issues of politics, social

justice and a hatred for "patronizing superiority."

The VCR library includes some select covers, having paid tribute to Misfits, Operation Ivy, Fear and FIDLAR. Talk of a Christmas track includes resurrecting a Hank Angel track called "All I Want for Christmas is my Rickenbacker Back."

I have known these guys for a few years. As a music photographer, I am often drawn visually to a band as much as their sound. To say these guys are an exciting band live, is an understatement. No matter the size or makeup of the crowd that comes to see them, they deliver that satisfying mix of high energy and visual excitement. In a reality that means your audience might just be the other bands that night all the way to a sold-out venue, the band feels collectively, "You play like your life depends on it. We have played to and been in these crowds." I have a lot of respect for bands that can play with conviction to a small crowd like they are playing to a full arena.

VCR is a band that has come together with a solid foundation. These guys have been in and continue to be part of a bunch of bands in the local scene. They are very much a team, with everyone contributing to words and music, and you will hear everyone's voice in a VCR set.

Aidan Engel (Hank Angel and His Island Devils, Sado Mannequin, Whiskey and Fire) was 16 when his Dad (Hank Angel) bought him his first guitar. He was taught traditional rockabilly style, that he later put his own spin on with a healthy dose of "distortion and attitude." He plays a Telecaster into a Fender Blues Deville with a DS-1 distortion pedal.

I asked Kyle Burnett (Safe Decisions, Rat Limbs, Dead Rights) where he learned how to play bass. "My mom used to make me go to a Christian youth group when I was super young. I had some good friends there including my friend Nick Vance who was the lead guitarist in the worship group. I learned a lot from him but other than that I was self-taught through chord charts and playing along to my CDs. My mom was a country singer and guitarist, so she gave me all her old chord books, bought me a cheap Stratocaster and sent me on my way." Kyle plays a Mexican Fender P bass, with a SansAmp Tri-A.C. to a Kustom Deep End Bass stack.

Bryce Gillis (Joy, Solvent of Society, Skurry, Mass Distraction, Strategic Abuse, REK) remarked "I took drum lessons at Alloy Music in about grade 4. I learned from a man named Gary who has since passed away. Wicked drummer, amazing person. He taught me how to play with the traditional grip but I kind of grew out of it. I dropped lessons and practiced a lot at home and annoyed my parents. Eventually bands came along into high school." Bryce uses Paiste cymbals with a Pearl Forum series kit. He plays with Vic Firth pure grit sticks or Zildjian dipped sticks, size 5A or 5B with white nylon tips. Evans skins.

VCR is self-described as a "passion" as opposed to a trade. All the guys are in jobs that help cover the costs of studio times, rentals and merch, and, "If it costs you to get on a ferry so you can play, that's what we will do." With more music and thirst for the road being in the crosshairs, the idea of being on a label was brought forward. The leap from a DIY reality to having someone arranging tours, promotion and finding opportunity does

VICTORIAS LOCALS ONLY

carry some appeal to the band. This hunger for performing has meant the band has found themselves in some interesting places and situations over the past few years. Before the guys played me the new EP live, we shared some laughs over gig stories. I am sure a lot of bands have shared similar stories of sketchy or odd venues, marginal hotels, stamp size stages and the woes of having suffered broken strings, sticks, running out of material and landing on a bill that clearly wasn't the right fit. VCR has played with a lot of great bands and I asked who the band would want to see themselves on a bill with, or a dream gig. "Pears, NOFX, Against Me, The Briefs, Stitches or The Wheels," were names brought forth with Ramones added as a band I am sure many have dreamed of sharing a stage with.

A much-discussed topic is brought up regarding the year past and the future of live music. Facing fewer venues, a backlog of cancelled gigs and uncertainty over festivals, VCR seems very much geared for the challenge. Perhaps the road ahead sees "vaccinated" shows or the return of house shows for a while.

"We want to be ready, and certainly won't be taking future gigs for granted."

I borrow a set of plugs from Bryce because I have got out of the practice of packing a proper gear bag. The band launches into all four tracks of *Dismantled*. The boom through the floor is a welcome, familiar feeling with just enough 1-2-3 4 to launch you right out of your boots.

Check out Vic City Rejects on Bandcamp and through socials:

viccityrejects.bandcamp.com

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Momy Fortuna

Interview with lead singer and bassist Brandy Bones

By Claude Montreuil

Photos by David Jacklin, Ari Mansell, and Shimona Henry

Absolute Underground: Can you tell me who the band Momy Fortuna is?

Brandy Bones: We are horror-scoring scream-queens from Vancouver, Canada.

AU: Who are your band members?

BB: Brandy Bones; Lead singer and electric bass player. Emily Bach, violin and effect pedals. Bina Mendoza, percussion and drums. Kat Bastow, vocals and keys.

AU: It would be interesting to learn about each of your backgrounds in music.

BB: I am the upright bass player and singer for Big John Bates from Vancouver. I was also in an American psychobilly band called the Whiskey Wailers.

Emily Bach came up in orchestras and chamber groups. She is the violin player in Vancouver bands: Dirty Spells, Big John Bates, and Eric

Campbell and the Dirt.

Bina Mendoza is the drummer for Vancouver/Victoria bands Mendoza, Heron, Cambodia and Nostrum.

Kat Bastow has a degree in musical composition and classical voice. She also owns a vocal coaching business. She is the keyboardist and singer of Manticore Kiss from Vancouver.

Momy Fortuna



AU: How did Momy Fortuna first happen? How did the band members meet?

BB: The band originally started as a recording project of mine in 2014. I used to watch tons of horror movies when I was living in a boat to pass the time in between touring (since making friends in Vancouver is like a seven-year process and I didn't have any) I really began to appreciate how deep the waters were in the world of

horror scoring.

In 2018 I recruited my friend and violinist bandmate Emily Bach who heard the single and

urged me to form a full band. Through mutual friends I met Bina Mendoza. She heard we were looking for a drummer and tried out. It was obvious after hearing this heavy hitting percussionist that she was our match. Our fourth member is the multi-talented Kat Bastow. She invited Emily and I to one of her solo shows and we were so impressed that we asked her to join that very evening. The rest is history.

AU: What is the best way to describe the music of Momy Fortuna?

BB: We want to make the hairs on your neck stand up. We like sounding scary and intense. But not in the turn up your amp as loud as it goes and incoherently scream at you kind of scary. But through dark atmospheric compositions, weird time signatures, and haunting melodies. Ok and maybe SOME occasional screams... just to keep you on your toes! Like a cult-wave coven sleepover that you might not wake up from. If you like horror movie music, you will like us. Also we like hailing satan and hexing shit.

AU: Where are all of you from?

BB: The band is from Vancouver. I am from Fairbanks, Alaska and Florence, Montana USA.

Emily is from a farm outside of the village of Champion, Alberta. Kat is from Vancouver, BC Bina is from....

AU: What goals are you hoping for with Momy Fortuna?

BB: Our goal is to eventually get our feet into the movie industry and be horror-scoring Omegas.

AU: Did the last year give you a new form of creativity and sound about this challenging time?

BB: During the Corona times, or as Emily calls it, 'the Sadentery,' we have been split up geographically as I am currently in Germany waiting out the storm. Even still, we have been quite active in the post production of our newest upcoming album *Hexennacht* (available July 2021). We

VANCOUVER VENGEANCE

shows again, where will it start up again for your band?

BB: When live music remerges back into our lives, I am hoping to get back up and running firstly in Vancouver. Here we can shake off the cobwebs and get back into our swing on our home turf. From there we will be working with our European booking agency Truemmer Booking & Promotion and go have some fun in Europe.

AU: I am glad to introduce a new all female band with so much talent... please tell me more about your band Momy Fortuna

BB: It's so difficult to describe sounds with words. But an audience member once told us, "your music sounds how my period feels," and that's what continues to resonate with us.

We consider ourselves ritualistic neoclassical darkwave.

Our metal nuances make us heavier than your average neoclassical darkwave act, so perhaps think of us as the satan worshipping granddaughters of Dead Can Dance.

We fuck with horror movies, plainchant, cult culture. We are inspired by Marc Korven, (who composed music for *The Witch*), of course Goblin, and Dead Can Dance,

We don't have a guitar player, so you'll hear us shred electric violin, effects, vocals, keys, or a combination of such with uncomfortable arrangements, harmonies and effects. We love chanting and delirium, doubling-down on sounds that make us laugh, channelling strangeness and distance by using other languages.

Fun fact about our name, it comes from the witch in the book "The Last Unicorn." It is purposely misspelled.

Fun fact about our album *Hexennacht*; The day we started recording our album, Notre Dame caught on fire. We took this as a Satanic omen of success. So in our cover art for our singles and our full album, we incorporate the North Rose Window to commemorate that day.



have been making music videos, launching promotion campaigns for three singles leading up the full album release. Zoom calls, group chats, task delegation. I've been pretty proud of our productivity while we can't really be physically together at the moment.

AU: When it is possible for live

The next single we are about to release is our homage to cult horror scoring masters Goblin. "Suspiria" will be available on April 16, 2021!

momyfortuna.com

momyfortuna.bandcamp.com

facebook.com/fraufortuna

Photos by David Jacklin, Ari Mansell, and Shimona Henry

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No Hope For The Lost

AU How did No Hope For The Lost come to be?

Re: We reformed after I joined the project while it was still named Deadlights. Covid 19 essentially left us back at the drawing board, so we took the time to make something entirely new.

Nate: Deadlights was going through some changes and Re and I came to the conclusion that it was time to rebrand.

AU: Describe your sound in five words?

Re: Melodic, Groovy, Formulated, Spacey, Inspired

AU: Top five bands that your band sounds like?

Re: Jinjer, Dir en Grey, Code Orange (Underneath era), Periphery, Devin Townsend

AU: We understand your new EP is based on Final Fantasy X, what is it about that video game that inspired you?

Re: Personally, I grew up playing the video game and was a huge fan of it and X-2 during a very interesting time in my childhood where I often used the games as an escapism from reality as most gamers grew up doing. Honestly from what I remember, I recommended the idea of conceiving the EP around the video game after I found a Yuna stuffy at our local comic store. I brought up the idea drunkenly to Nate, and the rest was history!

Nate: FFX was the last FF game that I really got hyper into. I found the lore of the game to be fascinating and some themes I really connected with.

AU: We understand Nathanael Bohnet owns Octave Studios in Medicine Hat, Alberta, how was it having unlimited access to a studio and recording along with bandmate/producer Re Mayer during current pandemic times?

Re: We actually live together so it's been a very great workflow! We started working on the EP shortly before I moved in and went crazy on it as soon as I got settled in here. I never expected to live at the studio with Nate, but we have really turned it into a happy home and more or less live like a family..

Nate: It's fucking awesome to be honest. Living together offers this really cool vibe. Not only do I get to see what Re is up to while she messes around with beats and expanding her knowledge on the electronic end of production, but I also have a set of ears I trust to bounce things off of when I am working on something. When we do get to sit down and work together, we get into a groove that allows us to just keep bouncing off of each other. It's just a blast being able to jive with someone on that level.

AU: How did you guys adapt to

releasing an EP in a pandemic era?

Re: Considering we have no shows to play, we more or less upped our internet presence and committed to properly releasing an EP. I run a Facebook group for the band that is very involved (No Hope For The Lost Soupposting), and Nate has been really getting into the Twitch thing!

Nate: I feel this pandemic downtime really helped us take our time and make sure that we put in the work to put our best foot forward with the EP, as well as build a foundation for how we work together to allow us to continue to grow.

AU: How was the Medicine Hat metal scene before Covid, and how will it be after?

Re: It was good but we do live in a small city where there isn't a huge following to begin with, but the scene has always been resilient and has always found ways to keep going. I think when things start up again, everyone is going to do their best to hit the ground running.

Nate: Our scene was small, but we were a passionate bunch. Each band has its fanbase and each band tried their best to bring it when they were performing. What I do feel, and hope will happen when live shows come back, I hope the thirst for live shows really helps bring more people into the scene and helps us come out of this bigger and stronger than before.

AU: Post Covid plans to hit the stage and tour?

Re: Not currently! We are very focused on staying in the studio and getting live stream shows set up.

Nate: We had a tour planned as well as a few festivals booked before everything happened, so it would be nice to get to getting back on stage. The end of this is near, but we are not out of it yet. **AU:** Any plans to record another video game-inspired release?

Re: Yes. We have discussed a mutual fandom of The Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask, I personally want to make a sequel to *The Pilgrimage* concerning the Final Fantasy X-2 story, and it would be cool to make some stuff about Dead Space. I also eventually would love to work on some Neon Genesis Evangelion material.

Nate: Honestly, yes! I love that we have an openness to write about whatever we feel works best. The Deadlights EP had songs about two different Stephen Kings Books, Ned Stark, Darth Revan, and Braun Strowman. Having this EP entirely about FFX solidifies that we will write about and draw from what we love. I personally wouldn't mind diving into some themes from things like Death Note.

AU: If you could be one video game character, who would it be and why?

Re: This is a good one! I would have to say a tie between Yuna from FFX-2 and Ophelia from Brutal Legend. Yuna being because I love how she becomes this badass singer summoner girl that searches for Tidus. Ophelia because she gets to make out with Jack Black at the end of the game.

Nate: Oh damn, that is a hard one. I would have to come down to my OG in Smash Bros and the main character from the first game that ever sucked me into gaming, Link.

AU: Advice on self-recording and releasing?

Re: Take URM classes and get a publicist. Watch the Youtube tutorials, ask stupid questions and get made fun of until you get it right.

Nate: Re hit the nail on the head. Look for the right sources of information, practice, and understand it is a process. If you put in the work, you will be amazed what you will be capable of.

AU: What should we know about No Hope For The Lost that we don't already?

Re: I don't want to officially state this, but I am pretty sure we are the first if not currently only band in Medicine Hat with trans representation in the band (I go by she/they pronouns). I do solo music based in EDM and experimental hip-hop under the moniker Rare Ben. I'm also the synth player in a project with my friend from Crimson Caliber called Hawaiian Donkey Punch.

Nate: I do the Twitch and the YouTube thing. I used to release weekly vocal covers and the occasional tips and tricks videos. I am changing over to do weekly streams for vocal covers instead, as well as streaming some gaming. I am also currently mixing an EP for a band called Invicta Heights. You can find me on YouTube at natebohnnet and on twitch at nohopeforthenate

AU: Any final words for our readers?

Re: SOUP SOUP SOUP SOUP SOUP SOUP SOUP SOUP SOUP SOUP. That's 10 out of 10 soups I give this interview! Follow No Hope For The Lost Soupposting on Facebook!

Nate: SOUP! Also, check out Yu Yevon on whatever streaming platform you choose!

AU: Where can fans follow the band?

Re: Facebook, Instagram, all streaming services. My personal Insta and TikTok is rarebenisdead.

Nate: You can find me on Instagram @nate.themetalguy or octavestudiosmedhat, on Youtube @ NateBohnnet, on twitch @ NoHopeForTheNate. But most importantly, you can find No Hope For The Lost on Instagram, Facebook, and our lyric and music videos can be found on my YouTube channel.





Juliet Ruin

By AU Editorial

Absolute Underground: For Absolute Underground readers, please tell us how did Juliet Ruin come to be?

JR: Juliet Ruin formed of the former members of a similar project Fiction of Fate. We tore down the old band and built back up with new material and a plan to make Jess, the frontwoman, more of a focal point.

AU: Congrats on your new EP "Dark Water," we understand it was initially meant to just be a single, but turned into a four-track release, why the decision for that?

JR: We were just writing whatever may come with no plans and we just kept having more material we really loved flowing out of our writing sessions. We felt we had to get it all down and switched from the plan to just record one tune and went for the four on the EP.

AU: We understand for this EP and with a changed line up you decided to go heavier

easy. The last few tunes written for the previous album were the heavier and lower tuned songs (seasons, ftw) so we really just followed the direction we had started to go down with those tunes. Jess spent the first few months of the pandemic really sharpening her vocal technique and really found her "aha!" moment with false chord screams. She got so good so fast that we made the decision to drop all backing vocalists from the recording to better focus on what she was doing.

AU: How was recording and producing this record with Diego Fernandez (Eye of Horus)? We really enjoyed him on your title track single. How was it having an outside artist from the group on a new track?

JR: We had worked with Diego previously on the

from your previous release, *Old Stardust, Love and Chaos* LP and went back to him because we have such a fun, efficient, and creative time working with him. We were second-guessing the lead we had in one section of "Dark Water" and we just asked if he'd want to drop a little solo in. It's an honour having him on there. The guy is an absolute guitar beast.

JR: The heavier sound writing seemed to go pretty

Old Stardust, Love, and Chaos LP and went back to him because we have such a fun, efficient, and creative time working with him. We were second-guessing the lead we had in one section of "Dark Water" and we just asked if he'd want to drop a little solo in. It's an honour having him on there. The guy is an absolute guitar beast.

AU: We really enjoy your music videos, as an independent band in the age of the internet; do you find it fully necessary to get big video visuals to create interest for the band?

JR: It's absolutely necessary right now I'd say. With no touring or shows to promote the music at we really think you need some visuals to grab the eye and draw people in.

AU: Does the band ever get mistaken as a solo project?

JR: No, but Jess does get called Juliet often when people recognize her from the band.

AU: The big topic, of course, these days, is the age of Covid, how has the band adjusted to the times?

JR: We changed our release plan for "Dark Water" from a more traditional style release

to just trickling the songs out one at a time with individual videos for each. It felt like a good way to keep interest up without being able to pump shows. We haven't seen each other much though, we've been erring on the side of caution and haven't been getting together to practice for some time.

AU: How is the Edmonton metal scene coping with the Covid era, do you think some venues and bands will survive the financial strain?

JR: Some bands are quiet; some are thankfully working on new material. We are definitely worried about what the landscape will look like

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and what venues will make it through. We'd be shocked if we didn't lose a few venues through this.

AU: Any plans post Covid to hit the stage and tour? and if so what cities can fans keep an eye on to check you out?

JR: We will absolutely get out there when the time comes. We haven't made plans yet with the situation still being so unknowable. For the first go, we will probably stick to western Canada, but are starting to think about going to the eastern side and the States once we can start to really plan that.

AU: What should we know about Juliet Ruin that we don't already? Anything else to promote?

JR: The name Juliet Ruin comes from Jess's middle name (Juliette). She told the group as we were forming that she may want to use that as the stage name but we all like it so much it became the band name. Nothing to promote besides the "Dark Water" EP.

AU: Any final words for our readers?

JR: Thanks to everyone who's checked out the "Dark Water" EP so far. The feedback has been lovely. If you want to check it out it's available pretty much everywhere for streaming and download, and CDs are available on our website through our merch link.

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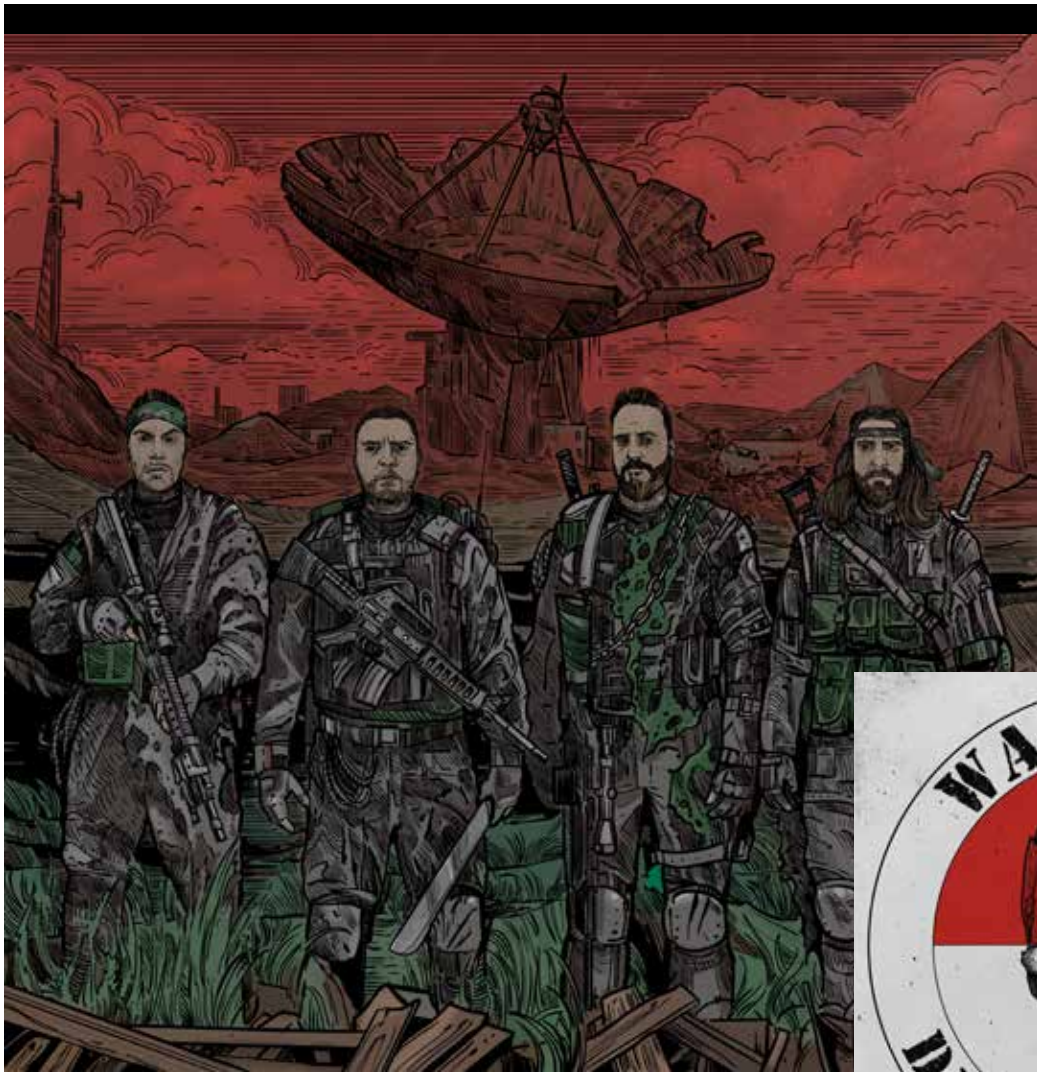
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WarCall

AU: Tell us how did WarCall came to be?

WarCall was born from the ashes of Plan B, the

former band of Mat and Gord. Plan B had good success in the Montreal metal scene in the early 2000s, but with changes in band members and a thirst for heavier music, the band decided to change its name and direction and

WarCall was born. WarCall's second official show was opening for Kalmah. Two weeks later, we were on the road with Catamenia and later we went out with Impaled Nazarene. Good start! We developed a road warrior approach we still have to this day.

AU: How would you describe the band's sound?

It is fairly traditional metal in general. We like to think it is a blend between Motörhead and Dissection. We mix classic metal and thrash elements with melodic death and black metal and a touch of punk rock. It could also be described as very heavy and fast rock and roll!

AU: We understand that WarCall is releasing not one, but two EPs in 2021. Why did the band choose to

MONTREAL MASSACRE

title for the album

AU: How would you compare these two new EPs to your back catalog of albums?

It is a good, coherent, and consistent continuity of our previous four albums. Each time, we want to push ourselves a little further and *Dead End* is no exception. The vision for *Dead End* was to bring back the dual guitar sound and also, a full sound, tight production, and good, authentic performances. Safe to say that we feel it is our best work so far and are really proud of the result.

AU: How has it been exposing your music to fans without live shows?

Very challenging. The last show we played was the 2020 Winter Bash on January 25th. It was really a success and injected a good dose of motivation to start the year strong. Lockdown did not interfere that much with our goals because we had already planned on not playing too many shows in 2020 in order to record the album.

AU: How is Montreal's metal scene and venues coping with no live shows?

All the bands I know are on standby now and I think bands will have to work a little harder to get back into the game when it starts back up. We are not into the internet performances, live streaming virtual shows, and all that shit. WarCall is an authentic live band that needs to be experienced in person to fully appreciate. It is tough for the venues and I just hope that we will still have some places to play after this is behind us.

AU: The band is a full-on DIY band, we understand that the band has self-booked three European tours, any advice to share?

The only way we know to do it is by networking. The first time we booked Europe was through an agency so during that first tour, we met tons of people, bands, and promoters and we kept in touch with them.

AU: How did you find touring Europe compared to touring Canada?

There is a lot of people per square foot in Europe and the distance between gigs is far less than in Canada. We spend a lot less time in the van and a lot more time visiting, drinking, chilling out in Europe than in Canada. Over here, it is not uncommon to drive eight hours to the next gig. In Europe, you have millions of people in towns that are two hours apart so it makes traveling easier. Having that road experience from Canada can make it interesting in Europe. We are not scared to drive from Prague to Paris in one day!

AU: Was your music video for the single "The Chase", done DIY as well?

The video was somewhat DIY because the director who made it is a long-time friend of the band so he helped us as a favor. I think DIY bands need to be surrounded by talented people to help them in order to succeed. The actors in the video are also friends and family of the band.

AU: Anything else to promote?

We are here for the long run. Fifth album in and we feel as if it was our first. We try to foster the mentality we had when we were beginning and thought everything was possible. Of course, with experience, we know the game and our expectations are really realistic, but we like to keep a certain naivety and careless optimism for the future of the band and it keeps the enthusiasm high. Expect a lyric video in the next few weeks, another video to promote *Dead End PT. 2*, and look out for the physical version of the album. We will combine the two EPs on one LP with bonus stuff and a different cover artwork, so it is going to be worth it to get it!

AU: Any final words for our readers?

Stay heavy, thanks for supporting the independent scene. Mainstream music, including mainstream metal, is getting more and more standardized, and sanitized. Independent bands are there to keep music artistic without caring too much about the economics of it and THAT is art.

AU: Where can fans follow the band?

Check us out on Facebook, Youtube, and Spotify, but mostly, check out www.warcall.ca



do two EPs instead of a full album for this year to follow your four previous albums (*Invaders* (2017), *Ill* (2015), *Blood, Guts, and Dirt* (2013), *Demonarchy* (2008)?

Because of the lockdown, the recording process of the album was a little longer than anticipated. We wrote the album in the course of 2019 and we were planning on recording it in the first months of 2020 to release later in the year. Early in 2021, we were well into the mixing/mastering process but wanted to work some more on a few songs. Instead of postponing even further the release, we decided to split it in two: *Dead End PT. 1* is a more straightforward metal EP, and *PT. 2* will have more atmospheric touches.

AU: Any advice to give for current bands trying to get their self-recordings done?

It was a really interesting process. We are lucky enough to have two band members with really good recording equipment and experience so we opted for the "divide and conquer" approach. The process was really straightforward and satisfying. Gord did really good on the vocals. Finally, JC did the mastering and here we are! The takeaway we got from this experience and that I would like to share with other bands is this: you have to have a plan, a vision, stick to it, but be flexible and adaptative. Our vision for this album was to make the best sounding, tightest album we could, with the best possible individual performances. We never lost sight of what we wanted to accomplish.

AU: How much of these current Covid times influenced your songwriting for the releases?

I could say it was some of the inspiration behind it, but I would be lying. The last song we wrote for the album was "The Chase," and the first demo for it dates back to November 2019. Covid definitely influenced how we present the album, artwork, etc. though. For example, we made the choice to have the band represented in a drawing instead of a classic band picture to remember that 2020 was a weird and different time. The title also was changed. Early on, the album's working title was *Morse Code*, but with all that happened in the first six months of 2020, how people reacted, not always seeing the best side of humanity, we thought that *Dead End* was a perfectly well-suited



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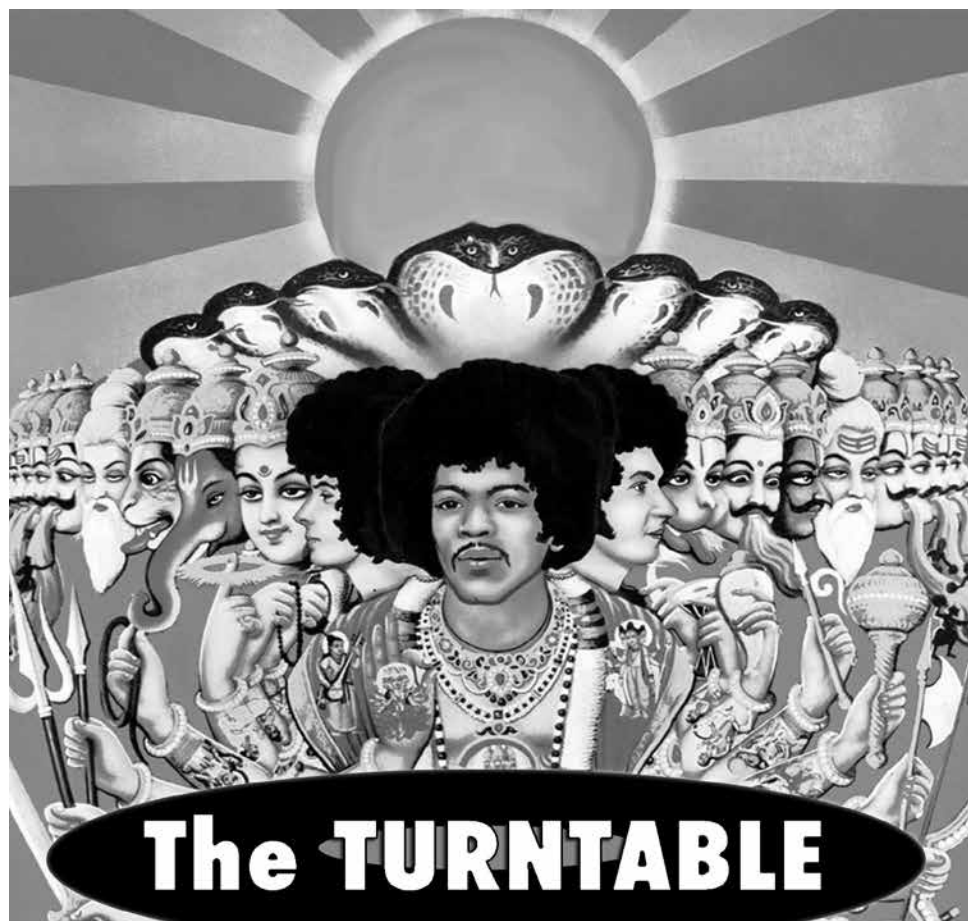
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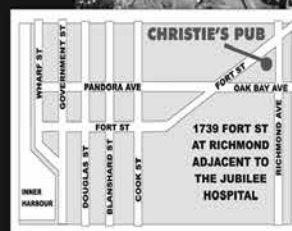
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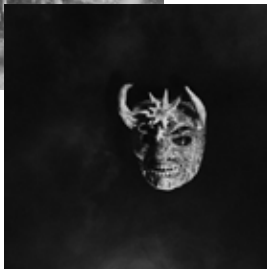
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Ischemic

Interview with Anthony Abbatangelo - Bass Guitar, Recording Engineer
By AU Editorial



blackened death-doom, with lots of stylistic shifts and twisty song structures to keep people on their toes. The production is a fairly stripped-back and DIY affair, with an emphasis on crusty guitar tones and a huge vocal sound.

AU: We read in the credits you have some well-respected artists such as Topon Das (Fuck The Facts) who did the mastering and album artwork by Danika Zandboer (who did album artwork for Vile Creature's Glory, Glory! Apathy Took Helm!

How was it to have them on board for the full length?

AA: We tried to take on as much of the production ourselves as possible for this one, but it definitely helps to have artists like them help polish things and bring the whole package to the next level.

Topon mastered our last album *Stagnation & Woe*, and his production work is a huge influence on us. His work on the Fuck the Facts records especially is like the perfect balance between clarity and chaotic heaviness.

Danika is actually my partner of many years and we've always wanted to collaborate on a photo project together, and this was the perfect excuse to do it! I had helped her out on the set of that Vile Creature photoshoot a few months before work started on Ischemic, an experience that definitely helped inspire the new artwork.

AU: We understand that because of Covid times, the band wrote and recorded the album entirely in the basement of vocalist Isabelle Tazbir's house in Scarborough, ON. Did this add to the doom and gloom of Ischemic's sound or would you have preferred a recording studio?

AA: We chose to record it there for a few reasons. That basement served as our jam space for years and I had engineered another band there once before, so it was a comfortable space that I knew would give us a reasonable drum sound to work

with. At the time of recording, we were also essentially COVID-bubbled together and could spend as much time as we wanted working there without time restrictions or safety worries. As you can see by the length of the album we obviously had the space to let some ideas and songs grow in unexpected directions because we weren't beholden to an outside studio or engineer. For the future, our drummer Kamble recently launched a new studio space in Kitchener-Waterloo so we'll likely be producing any new material there.

AU: Any words of advice on self-recording and releasing?

AA: Working DIY is tough but rewarding! Don't be afraid to ask for advice or pay for help from experienced pros, however. As I mentioned above, getting professional mastering or a trained artist's eye helping with cover art and packaging can take things that much further. Do favors for other bands, throw your own shows and pay everyone as well as you possibly can, let people crash on your couch when they're in town. All that goodwill that's generated eventually comes back to you.

AU: How is the Toronto metal scene coping with the closure of venues and no live shows for bands to perform?

AA: A lot of bands we love and have shared stages with in the past seem to be focusing on writing and producing new music to fill the gap in live shows. The venue situation wasn't so hot here before COVID and I don't see things getting better anytime soon. There are too many casualties to name but the closing of Coalition TO was especially painful, as that was the prime spot for metal, punk and noise shows in the downtown core. I hope and would personally love to see a resurgence of house shows and DIY spaces in Toronto in the future.

AU: How has the band been adapting to promoting a new album without live shows and touring at the moment?

AA: A few things. We took the step of working

with a publicist for the first time and probably put more thought into image, band photos, online presence etc. than we really have before. I think that's all stuff that would tend to fall by the wayside in the past since we would usually be consumed with the work of booking our own shows, wrangling bands and venues etc. We also made our merch available online for the first time, as in the past we would typically prefer to make direct sales at shows.

AU: Any plans post Covid to hit the stage and tour? and if so what cities can fans keep an eye on to check you out?

AA: The original plan was to release this album last July, and we had a small tour booked in Ontario and Quebec (Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, Sherbrooke, etc.) with some great bands like Greber, Discrvst and Sarin. We would definitely like to make that happen again some day, but obviously can't say for sure. Everyone in the band has pretty demanding careers and personal lives so we tend to stick to small regional tours over the course of a week or long weekend.

AU: What should we know about Ischemic that we don't already? Anything else to promote?

AA: As I mentioned, our drummer Kamble is opening a studio and also dropping a new album with his other death-metal project Mors Verum in the near future. If a more hyperactive and technical version of Ischemic sounds appealing to you then they are definitely worth checking out!

AU: Any final words for our readers?

AA: Thanks for supporting DIY and independent metal!

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PHOTO CREDIT: Danika Zandboer



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Scare The Children

By Ryan Dyer

Beijing's Scare the Children are a Grimm Fairly Tale come to life. The mask-wearing shock rock ensemble resembles Mushroomhead or Slipknot in appearance, but the hard-hitting sounds they have concocted can be as cheery as they are disturbing, with keyboard tingles aiding the metal, sounding as if they are from a greasy and perverted dark carnival. The horrific masks they wear are absurdly effective and crudely endearing. They really put a face to their songs about possessed dolls and haunted kids. Check out their highly theatrical video for "The Seduction of Little Timmy," off of their debut album *Odyssey*, which according to the band was inspired by a true story. I spoke with members Sadako, Matt and Antoine about being a masked band in China, recent tours and a potential new album.

AU: Scare the Children comes out of Beijing, but you are all from different geographical locations. How did the band come together in this city?

Sadako: We all knew each other. It's a tiny scene in Beijing. Right now in the band there are Chinese, Kazakh and French members. It was a matter of getting along together as friends and conjuring up the willpower to create something together.

AU: How has the band evolved since its beginnings - either musically or appearance wise or member wise?

Matt: The band started as a four piece with drum/bass/guitar/keys. After some time the keyboard player left the band and we became a three piece. I left the band in 2019 and they replaced me with Antoine. Then this year I came back to the band playing bass and Danny came in as keyboards/backup singer and Yu came in as a new drummer so Sadako could focus on the lead singing. From that change we all got new costumes and masks and we are currently writing new songs to fit this new version.

Antoine: I wasn't in the band from the beginning, so I mostly speak from an outsider's POV. Costumes have changed for the second album and the new line up. I feel it's all a little more elaborate now than it used to be, but each member still has a character and a story, and designs their costumes based on it. Musically speaking the second album will have more varied influences as we are now five people with different backgrounds and we all like to bring our sound to the band.

AU: Does each mask and costume have a story to it?

Sadako: Yes, they do. The old ones were related to the haunted doll story while the new ones are individual characters with their own story.

Antoine: The new songs will also reflect that, in the form of urban legends attached to each character.

AU: You obviously stand out due to your theatrical approach and I believe having a stage presence and mystique is appreciated in China. Being anonymous, the band can seemingly fit in on any show or festival. Was this your aim when conceptualizing the band?

Antoine: I feel it was about delivering something fun and different, as the scene at the time was pretty rigid and stereotypical. Nowadays you can see more and more bands wearing masks or costumes and some even say Scare the Children inspires them. I will say that we are not seen on stage as a foreign or Chinese act but just an immersive experience.

Matt: We wanted to put a visual concept in accordance to the music to improve the stage performance. With the time spent in China, seeing many shows, we started to grow tired of the cliché long hair/black t-shirt metal bands. The masks, costumes, and stage props help the audience get into the universe the band is offering. Our ultimate goal would be to transform the show into a metal musical with stage props, actors and dancers changing between each song.

AU: You put out your album *Odyssey*, which is the story of Betsy - a haunted doll that attaches itself to a young boy. Eventually, Betsy is separated from the boy. The decades roll by and the doll tries to find its way back to its original owner. Is this based on a specific story or piece of media?

Matt: We wanted to put a concept on this album - each song should be linked to a longer story and chronologically be following the story of Betsy. When we wrote the songs we were focusing on how we can put Betsy into different periods of time and how the story would end. It became obvious that the story would end by having the doll getting back to the first owner.

Sadako: It was not based on anything. It came up through talking at the bar, like: hey let's make songs about horror stories (beers and gin and tonic are consumed). Yeah, let's talk about a haunted doll (beers and gin tonic are consumed). Oh yeah, and why not dress like it too (more beers and gin and tonic are consumed).

AU: Tell us about your music video, "The Seduction of Little Timmy." Any behind the scenes madness?

Matt: Lots of preparation for the props which got destroyed during the final scene, and we put them back together so we could redo that scene for a re-shoot, and another, and another. Also, lots of fake blood squirting everywhere so all our friends

ABSOLUTE ASIA

helping got covered in fake blood, which is not that easy to clean afterwards and is probably still on the floor of our friend's place that we filmed the video at.

AU: How did the Japanese tour go? They are fans of theatrical artists over there. Were the audiences polite and silent, though?

Antoine: We only saw one theatrical band, and they were amazing. It was some black metal madness. Also, the audiences really plays along, silence between black metal songs, but they get very warm and excited for a thrash band, for example. These guys understand what they're watching and act their part. I didn't really feel the "polite and

silent" part, but we were playing intimate venues really close to the crowd. These guys wanted energy, and wanted to give it back too. Also there's a crazy level of excellence and attention to detail over there, be it the bands or the tech staff. We got schooled big time.

AU: And what about your trek to Mongolia. Did you take the train?

Sadako: No train - no time. Mongolia was fucking intense. Everything is intense there - the people, the drinking, the food. It was just a unique experience. Can't wait to go back.

Antoine: We didn't take the train, but we sure did take a lot of vodka. Crazy fans over there, one of the most violent mosh pits I've seen. There was an 80 year old grandpa dealing punches over blast beats. We love you.

facebook.com/ScaretheChildrenBJ



Blast From The Past Deep Purple Live in 1985!

By Clark Mantei

Hello everyone. In this issue we travel back in time to Sunday April 6th, 1985 at Vancouver B.C.'s P.N.E. Coliseum. That evening's performance featured the reunion of Deep Purple's second and most famous lineup (July 69 - June 73), members Ian Paice (drums), Jon Lord (keyboards), Ritchie Blackmore (guitar) and new members Ian Gillian (vocalist) and Roger Glover (bassist) forming what is now renowned as the Mark 2 lineup. Together they recorded four albums until 1973 when the singer and bassist left and new singer David Coverdale and bassist Glenn Hughes arrived for several years of success in the third line-up. Ritchie eventually left to form Rainbow and new guitarist Tommy Bolin (RIP) filled his shoes up until his death in December 1976. After this happened the name Deep Purple retired as Whitesnake formed with the remaining Deep Purple members, and has always remained David Coverdale's band to this day.

So the story goes that one day in 1978, Ozzy left Black Sabbath as they hired a new singer who was up until then the vocalist for Ritchie Blackmore's Rainbow. This was none other than Ronnie James Dio... Dio joined Sabbath and when he left in 1983, singer Ian Gillian joined Sabbath and I kind of think that Ritchie decided to simply 'steal' him back leaving Black Sabbath once again without a vocalist. So with the death of Tommy Bolin and Whitesnake in full bloom, there was

now a perfect opening for Deep Purple to reunite its most famous lineup. In November of 1984 came the release of *Perfect Strangers*, the long awaited reunion of the classic lineup most famous for *Machine Head* ("Smoke on the Water" and

"Highway Star"). The sheer magnificence of this lineup made for a sellout tour around the world, and they recorded LPs 11 through 14 until Blackmore left for good in 1993.

Deep Purple formed in 1968 when classically trained organist and composer Jon Lord met Ritchie Blackmore, who was also well versed in classical theory. The two decided to make a 'psychedelic/ progressive' collaboration of rock 'n' roll music and formed a five-piece band with other members Ian Paice, Nick Sampler, and Rod Evans. The band was named after Ritchie Blackmore's grandmother favourite song "Deep Purple" and went on to record

three albums together with many hit singles ("Kentucky Woman" and, most notably, "Hush"). This lineup became known as Mark 1 when a greatest hits LP came out called *Deep Purple Mark I and II...* for those who wonder.

In 1970 came the album *In Rock* released in June and many refer to Deep Purple as the "Unholy Trinity" of hard rock along with Black Sabbath and Led Zeppelin. Deep Purple has remained a hard rock band ever since *In Rock* and to date they have released 21 albums. In 1993 guitarist Steve Morse joined Deep Purple and has remained their guitarist ever since. He's the only one, in my opinion, who can stand up to Ritchie Blackmore and plays Ritchie's parts to a tee, spot on in fact. August, 2020 saw the release of their latest album, *Whoosh!*, album number 21.

Ok let's quickly go back to Sunday April 6th, 1985. I was just 18 years and a drummer in a band that played a few Deep Purple cover songs, too. I lived in Victoria and we needed to travel via ferry to Vancouver. It had been raining for weeks with no end in sight. I awoke that morning to not a cloud in the sky. So perfect! I drove to guitarist Joe Fall's

house where I got onto his motorcycle and we travelled to the show... We were very excited indeed. Joe played guitar and had a Fender Stratocaster just like Ritchie Blackmore and he was thrilled to see his favorite guitarist live on stage. Woot woot! We were also meeting our new bassist that day, Steve was his name. We met at the PNE grounds and Steve had a gift...

He had two great seats close to the stage on stage right. Lower bowl seats from a perfect stranger named Steve? With great seats? He handed one to me and said "For you, Clark." AWESOMENESS!

The opening act was Girlschool who I had seen

back up Iron Maiden and Scorpions in Victoria the year before. I don't even remember their show as I was so excited to see Deep Purple. I had memorized all the drumming on several of their albums and here I was about to witness Ian Paice in his left handed world playing all the parts he made me learn. Did I mention I was excited?

The lights went down to a sold-out crowd and the vibe was intense. The music began as the lights went low. They started with "Highway Star" and I was in awe. The song is epic and there they were in front of me. During that classic solo Ritchie went down on one knee and played a fantastic run with one arm in the air and the other ripping the neck. He OWNED the guitar all night long.

Other highlights were the laser effect going along with the keyboard solo (it was also Bach's 300th anniversary and Jon Lord morphed Classical Music into Rock). A stellar solo. Then Ritchie joined in and they played Beethoven too from a rendition that Rainbow had recorded. Sensational beyond words for a teenager. I will note that Ritchie didn't seem happy that night and every problem he encountered he would simply walk off the stage, leading to a drum solo or a story, yet he always returned. The set list is included here for all to check out. During Ritchie's guitar solo in a laser pyramid some IDIOT threw a wine sack at him and he left the stage. WHY??? Anyway, they did play a full two hours until they left the stage and made the crowd wait for an eternity for an encore. When the lights went up there were a few minutes of disappointing booing and screams pleading for an encore. We never did hear "Smoke on the Water." Yet they were so good, after a few minutes we all left happy to have witnessed what was in fact magic as the band was in top form. Their synergy was undeniable. Deep Purple were back.

It's great that this is all now on YouTube and well documented in the history of Wikipedia too. Yet what was it about Ritchie Blackmore that is so revered? In this issue I offer you all this added bonus for all who appreciate the why and how he played the way he played. I recently reunited with my guitar teacher and mentor (1984 to 2011) Pat Fabrick after a decade. He appeared on Easter Sunday and we went looking through old cassettes of his music, when we came across a bootleg of this very Deep Purple show, which turned my story on Triumph into Deep Purple instead. So I asked him this question...

Would he write me a description of what's so unique about Ritchie Blackmore's style that achieved such perfection and recognition to the masses? His definition of that is posted below as well. Lastly to mention, I met deep Purple in Victoria in 2011 and showed them the old ticket stub from 1984. We had a good laugh at the old cheap prices from that era.

Until we read again... this has been Clark 'Super' Mantei, your wild-mannered reporter. "Rock Out ... Roll On"



Ritchie Blackmore ALL ABOUT TONE

"Tone is a chain and is completely related to every physical link – the wood, the string material, the pick material, the electronics and mechanics involved all along the chain. Ritchie Blackmore has always been astutely aware of tone production from the earliest days of rock music. Ritchie had an early insight into creating one's own sound. This insight led to a signature sound, one really great tone that was deliberate and permanent.

Who had a signature tone before Ritchie?

Ritchie understood the nature of the electric guitar as an instrument with a capacity for personal tone expression and the amplifier as tone generator. Who understood amplifiers in those days and then understood how to make

one perform to its potential?

Tone and volume are related and are to be squeezed out of the amp like a fluid. This is compression - extra output stage/preamp stage and their relationship. Ritchie recognized that a solidbody electric guitar is a tonal platform and how to modify it for his desired result.

The Stratocaster stood out as an instrument of personality and distinction. This is a powerful recipe for great electric guitar tone:

- Stratocaster
- Tortoise Pick

- Scalloped Fingerboard
- Boosted amp output
- Unique Preamp

I was always simply astounded at his pure finger tone, the most important ingredient. I have scalloped my own guitars exclusively since 1979 due to John McLaughlin and the result was a total tone transformation as well as the improved touch! Every note is clear and clean in a way that can not compare to the same guitar unscalloped! Also, the use of a very hard pick is a tone essential but only tortoise has that tubey/glassy sounding tone (especially on an acoustic guitar).

Then add the electrifying "feel" so evident in the song "Hush"! I would love to know Hendrix's thoughts on the guitar work in "Hush." Ritchie pioneered a heavier style and cool factor to pave the way for all who followed. Ritchie Blackmore is a foundational rock guitarist, a master of tone and touch, ahead of his time. These are the qualities of a visionary who had the discipline to not simply play good or even great music. That alone would have been enough. Ritchie added the practical ability to perfect his tools to a higher standard than was available at the time. Another genius may have done such and never succeeded but Ritchie did all that with authority and delivered it with a showman's passion - louder, heavier and more fluid than his peers!

Ritchie Blackmore is still underrated to this day for his influence. He is the total package, a seminal figure in the transformation of rock music into high art.

- Pat Fabrick





Mason Storm

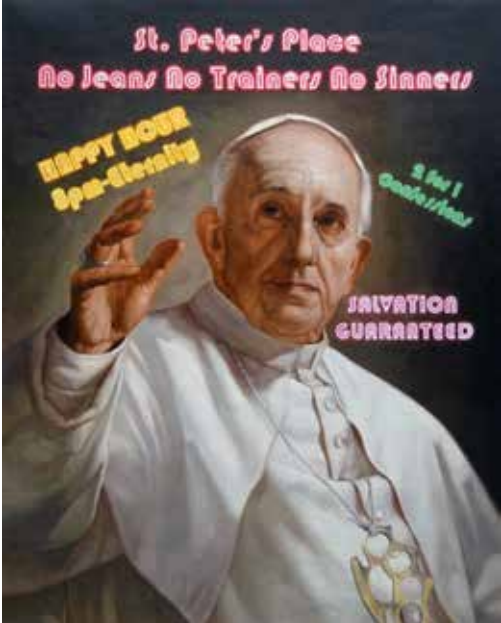
Interview by Claude Montreuil

Mason Storm is an artist known worldwide for his bold, provocative works. Not to be confused with the porn star of the same name, British artist Mason Storm has made a name for himself in the art genres of sculpture, print and realistic canvas art pieces. Apart from his art, Mason Storm is known for his interesting masks which he uses to hide his identity and create the notion of mystic surrounding his personality. He began wearing them in 2010 when he said he was going to reveal the face of the artist Banksy in an oil painting.

Absolute Underground: Where are you from?
Mason Storm: I come from North East London, I'm in the Borough of Hackney, Stoke Newington.

AU: How did art first happen in your life?
MS: I've always been interested in art from as long as I can remember, I was always drawing or making models as a kid. I was also very much into martial arts and used to go to a youth centre to do judo. One night judo was cancelled and my friend persuaded me to go into the art class instead, it was amazing and I attended for nearly 20 years, way past being considered a youth.

AU: Who really influenced you to do art?
MS: My parents were always supportive of everything I did but the person who probably had the most influence in my art was the man who ran the art department at the Youth Centre, an amazing man called Alan John Clayden, a great artist and an inspiration who the art world owes a great debt too, he inspired and mentored so many amazing artists, sadly he is no longer with us.



AU: How would you describe your style of creativity?
MS: I don't know if I have a style as such, I just love creating, one day it's painting, the next it's sculpture, another day it may be photography. I see so many interesting things around me that I want to capture them the best way I can.

AU: What music do you like to listen to, and what was the last live show you saw?
MS: I love all kinds of music especially rock music and metal, but I equally love rap, grime, reggae, 80s pop, depends on the day and what I'm doing.
The last concert I went to was Def Leppard, my good friend and fellow artist Gerry Laffy used to play in a band with the lead guitarist Phil Collen, an amazing guitarist, so we got the full VIP treatment, was a great night, from the

little bit I remember!
AU: Tell me Mason, what really makes you have fun in life?
MS: Fun for me is music, good friends, art shows, family, simple things. Oh and a good day's shopping, I do love to shop!

AU: What do you respect in a human being, and who are the ones you really don't want to be around?
MS: I like to be around creative people but above all I like 'good' people, people who respect others and help others without being asked, there are a lot of bastards in the world so finding the good people is fabulous and a very precious thing.
AU: The million dollar question, who is Banksy?
MS: Banksy? I have no idea who she is, but for an actual million dollars I'll tell you.
AU: You are one of the most talented artists in England, some pretend you

know Banksy?
MS: I'm the most talented artist in my studio when I'm in there on my own. Everyone thinks I know Banksy, I have no idea who she is.



AU: Thank you very much Mason Storm and now you have a chance to tell our fellow Canadians more about you or anything you'd like to say to us about your art?
For me you are an amazing artist and I truly thank you.



MS: Well what can I say about me?
To know me is to love me, surely that's enough?
I have three testicles.
I once met Elvis in a lift (I think it was Elvis, although it was at an Elvis impersonators seminar)
I have 30 inch biceps.
Chuck Norris



apologised for stepping on my foot.

www.masonstormenterprises.co.uk

PHOTO CREDIT: Tosh Marshall





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Russian Metal Band Kauan Explores “The Terror” with Ice Fleet!

By Ed Sum

In Russia, Anton Belov began making music in 2005 and his inspiration was based on the folklore of his hometown of Chelyabinsk. Pretty soon, he formed the band Kauan, a Finnish word meaning “for a long time,” and his debut LP, *Lumikuuro*, showed his unique ability to combine that heavy metal sound with introspective words into beautiful music.

Over eight albums, Belov and his collaborators—now based in Tallinn, Estonia—made a niche for themselves. His interest in the dark secrets that surround his country never waned, and the release of *Sorni Nai* (2015), detailed the mysterious Dyatlov Pass Incident, where nine doomed hikers mysteriously died in a blizzard in the Ural Mountains. Some say they met up with the supernatural that live here, and others blame an alien encounter of the UFO variety. This album has garnered universal acclaim since its release.

This band is back to explore an even scarier

moment—the discovery of a fleet of ships with slain sailors and guests. What did they encounter? A nearby circle of rocks and a bitter winter landscape doesn’t have a lot to say, and only investigators can only guess. Kauan’s upcoming album *Ice Fleet* will attempt to answer it when it launches April 9, 2021!

Also included is a roleplaying game for listeners to solve the mystery. As the soundscape fills the room, players can become immersed into the mystery, and attempt to find answers for themselves. The rules are based on Lost Pages’ Into the Odd system. The condensed version—no doubt inspired by Dungeons and Dragons—makes play simple.

Adding to the lore is encouraged. Belov’s attempt to give answers includes The Philadelphia Experiment. However, for those who are wanting to go further with this album and role playing game, this artist encourages using your imagination to fill in the gaps. Those people who are well versed with horror literature and films can revisit either John Carpenter’s *The Thing* or H.P. Lovecraft’s *The Colour Out of Space*.

But as with any horror role playing game or film, the goal is to see who will survive!

Album Pre-order:

<https://kauan.bandcamp.com/album/ice-fleet>



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Belushi Speed Ball

Interview by Dustin Jak

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you known for?

V: Vinny from Belushi Speed Ball, I do vocals and play guitar poorly.

AU: Give us a brief origin of the band if possible?

V: Belushi started in 2013 when we were eating out of a dumpster behind a Little Caesars Pizza. A man walked up to us and thought to himself, "Hey I can exploit these kids." That man was the infamous Senor Diablo! Thus the legend of Belushi Speed Ball was born. He put us to work making music, and have been releasing an album a year since.

AU: Describe Belushi Speed Ball's sound for losers who haven't checked you out yet?

V: Truthfully, we wrote one song in 2013. And then just keep rereleasing five to eight versions of that song.

If the question is, what does that song sound like, it sounds like "buh dah duggga duggga dugga buh dah dugga dugga buh dah, dah dah dah dah."

AU: Who are the members of the band and what does it say on their Tinder profiles?

V: Technically we have over 25 members. Belushi Speed Ball puts a huge emphasis on our live shows, which contain full theatrical performances. Once someone performs with Belushi they are in the band forever. With the exception of Jonny Cutrer who is fired on the "Prepare for Trouble EP" The main lineup is the following:

Jazzy Jazz Jazz - Bassist, she's happily married to Josh, so no Tinder

Josh - Camera extraordinaire, happily married to

Jazzy, so no Tinder

Kyle - Guitar/Vocals, Tinder: "I'm a Teacher, Congratulations."

Senor Diablo - Vocals/manager, Tinder: "I have dunkaroos for you to make gravy."

Daniel Neel - Drums, Tinder: *Just a picture of him being the god that he is on drums

Chase Palmer - Drums, Tinder: "Subscribe to Mr. Nosebleed."

James Ryan Bohr - Drums, Tinder: "I'm in 90 bands, I have an open time slot at 2:00pm June 15, 2023."

Michael Monroe - Captain Planet, Tinder: "Happily engaged to the girl I held at Courtney and Evan's wedding."

Chase Bensing - Guitars, Happily married, no tinder

Vinny - Guitar/Vocals, Tinder: I'm not on tinder, but when I was, it was just a pic of me and my son (see pic included).



AU: What is Belushi Speed Ball's mission statement?

V: In a cooperative effort among faculty, staff, parents, students and the greater community will: Nurture and sustain academic excellence for all students. Provide diversified instruction to meet the needs of all learning styles. Recognize multiple-giftedness.

AU: We noticed a serious obsession with arcades, everything 1980s, candy, video games, and BMX bikes with you guys. What's the deal?

V: Spongebob first and foremost. We are just children is all. All the other things you mentioned are launched into the crowd. Who doesn't want to win a BMX?

AU: What's your favorite candy to eat?

V: Sixstar chocolate whey protein

AU: Name some of your favorite video games?

V: We all have different video game favorites. Mine (Vinny) is easily "Super Mario World" and "Conker's Bad Fur Day."

Jazzy worked at a Gamestunk so she has a wide variety, her faves are "The Sims," "Rollercoaster Tycoon," "Dead or Alive Beach Volleyball" and "Defense Grid: The Awakening."

Senor Diablo is amazing at "Dr. Robotnik's Mean Bean Machine."

Daniel Neel loves some MMORPGs (i.e. WOW, Doda, League), "Assassin's Creed", and "Gradius 3"

Kyle loves "Mario Party" and "Halo 2."

James Ryan loves "Turtles in Time" and "Castlevania."

Chase Palmer's a "Skyrim" fan.

AU: Who are some of your favorite thrash bands? You are definitely the first band we have heard meld video games, candy, and crossover thrash metal.

V: Toxic Holocaust! Joel Grind actually mastered our last album!

Chemical Way, Municipal Waste, Condition Critical, Mrak, D.R.I., and Anthrax

AU: What are some of your favorite video game soundtracks?

V: OMG, EASILY THE MEGA MAN X SERIES! I strive to write music at this level. Bubble Crab from Mega Man X2 is a masterpiece!

AU: Do you guys still play video games?

V: Absolutely! Still trying to catch all the Pokemon.

AU: Does anyone in the band collect comic books? If so, what are some of your favorites?

V: Yes! I have a slough of low grade key issues. My favorites are my *X-Men 1*, *Hulk 181*, *Avengers 1*, and *Spiderman 129* (pics included).

Diablo has a huge *Dick Tracy* collection.

Chase Palmer loves *Conan*.

AU: Who are some of your favorite punk bands?

V: The Misfits, The Casualties, DTBP, Mosquito, Mr. C and the Pink Cigarettes, Jonny Pee Pee and the Pee Pee Mountain Boyz, Mommy's Cigarettes

AU: How have you guys been able to keep busy during Covid?

V: We used the pandemic time to write and release two new albums! We also released a single on Furby, an album on tapestry, and a single on Dunkaroos. We stayed active by playing live stream shows.

Finally, we were fortunate enough to play a socially distanced drive-in movie theater. Fans stayed in their cars, while we drove around, dressed up in Mad Max attire, playing from a



moving van.

AU: Do you have any plans in the near future?

V: We are back in the studio, and a little secret, we got a working single to play through a tiger electronics hand held. Also we are ready to play live again!

AU: Tell us about some of your songs and albums you have released so far.

V: We release an album a year. The main goal is to make fun fast music for everyone to party to!

Our latest release was on Tapestry, a double disc EP, a 12-inch glow-in-the-dark vinyl, and a single on Dunkaroos. The release was recorded and mixed by Chase Bensing, and mastered by Joel Grind (Toxic Holocaust). It features artwork by Metro Catpiss, and an alternate cover by Andre Bouzikov (Municipal Waste *The Art of Partying*)

<https://belushispeedball.bandcamp.com/>





From Beyond: Or, How Stuart Gordon Single-handedly Ushered Lovecraft into Modern Pop Culture.

By Vince D'Amato

It's hard to believe that it's already been a year since the passing of Stuart Gordon into the beyond, and I find myself still thinking about his massive and largely unsung impact on modern Lovecraft culture, which resonates strongly today even thirty-six years after *Re-Animator* was unleashed upon the world, thanks mainly to his contemporary re-envisioning of the author's works. It's a trip to think that Stuart Gordon, Brian Yuzna, Dennis Paoli, Charles Band and his brother Richard Band came together with Jeffrey Combs and Barbara Crampton nearly four decades ago to produce what would be the biggest influence on the shaping of current Lovecraft culture. I would passionately argue that without *Re-Animator*, there would be no *Color Out of Space* starring Nicolas Cage, no *Lovecraft Country* book or television series, no Lovecraft-inspired board games or card games. But this all begs the obvious question, was Stuart Gordon's *Re-Animator* the first example of a contemporary re-envisioning of Lovecraft's work? Or more specifically, was it the first example of the way this sub-culture thinks upon Lovecraft's work? Well, actually, no, it wasn't.



Artist H.R. Giger was a Swiss artist who made no secret that his work and designs were heavily inspired by the literary works of H.P. Lovecraft. Giger would design the look of Ridley Scott's *Alien* in 1979, six years before *Re-Animator*. And following *Alien*, John Carpenter would draw inspiration from Scott's sci-fi horror for his gory and exciting re-imagining of *The Thing* in 1982, which he would then follow-up with the Lovecraftian-themed *Prince of Darkness* (1987), *They Live* (1988), and finally *In the Mouth*



of *Madness* (1994). Would any of these films exist without *Re-Animator*? Obviously, yes; definitely the ones produced before 1985 like *The Evil Dead*, and almost definitely the ones that were produced post-1985; these films were all influenced by ideas of Lovecraft's writing, not directly by Stuart Gordon's films. However, the gigantic and undeniable difference between these films and Stuart Gordon's Lovecraft movies like *Re-Animator*, *From Beyond*, and *Dagon*, is that Gordon (and Brian Yuzna, and Dennis Paoli)

credited the works of H.P. Lovecraft directly; and following *Re-Animator*, their films actually seemed to go beyond just crediting Lovecraft as the source material and hit a level of marquee-marketing transcendence when they inadvertently created a micro-culture of a Lovecraftian world within their own realm of cinema. Of course this is also in part due to the fact that Gordon's Lovecraft adaptations were a hit for Executive Producer Charles Band's Empire Picture in the mid-to-late eighties – so of course, Band had a hand in the continuation of Gordon's and Yuzna's productions, further perpetuating their weird world of Lovecraft. And it's this very seed that would eventually become a driving force behind modern Lovecraft culture, as the films were discovered through the mass-distribution through video stores in the eighties and nineties. By 1990, Charles Band had completely turned his business model to direct-to-video movies, and Gordon was along for the ride.

Certainly, in terms of other people's "Lovecraft" films, we'd still have *In the Mouth of Madness*, *The Thing*, and *Alien* even if Gordon's films didn't exist – but where would *Color out of Space*, *The Resurrected*, *The Void*, *Mandy*, *Necronomicon*, *Bride of Re-Animator*, umpteen international and independent "Lovecraft"-inspired films and film festivals, and literary ideas from the likes of Brian Keene and Matt Ruff, actually be (and would they even exist) without the films of Stuart Gordon? Prior to H.R. Giger and *Alien* in 1979, the physical interpretation of Lovecraftian ideas in cinema were relegated on-screen to religious cults, sci-fi aliens, and alternate realities. Giger and *Alien* pulled the ideas of Lovecraft into the visceral arena of cinema. John Carpenter then exploited this new (and gory) aesthetic to his advantage in *The Thing*, although nobody would retroactively connect these films as Lovecraft-style films until years after Stuart Gordon got into the Lovecraft adaptation game. Now, anything with a tentacle becomes categorized as "Lovecraft-inspired" or "Lovecraftian." Stuart Gordon's films, and specifically *Re-Animator* and *From Beyond*, provided a proverbial looking glass for audiences to view, discover, and interpret Lovecraft's work in a more direct, and directly influential, manner. Again, it had been very important that Gordon's and Yuzna's films credited the source material and its author directly and prominently.

H.P. Lovecraft's original works were not exactly structured to service contemporary storytelling adaptations, themes, and cinematic expectations. Gordon, Yuzna, and Paoli had to basically work their asses off to create a new type of cinematic environment for Lovecraft's wild and meandering ideas, which would often, in the author's own work, take precedence over an actualized plot structure.

Gordon, in fact, turned to the plot structure of *Frankenstein* to create something cinematically coherent for *Re-Animator*, cutting entire segments from H.P. Lovecraft's original "Herbert West – Re-Animator," which had originally been published as a six-part serial (and was, in 1985, completely out-of-print). Going back to watch James Whale's *Frankenstein* (1931) is an utterly uncanny experience for anyone familiar with Stuart Gordon's 1985 film.

But in a strange way, not only have Gordon's films influenced a large number of others that came afterwards, they have also created a different and separate cinematic looking glass that lets us see films like *Prince of Darkness*, *They Live*, *In the Mouth*



Absolute Horror

of *Madness*, *Annihilation*, and *Mandy* (and others), all produced after 1985 and without direct influence of Gordon's own repertoire, as categorically "Lovecraft-influenced" or "Lovecraft-inspired". I would ask the question, without Gordon's direct Lovecraft adaptations, would fans of horror and the fantastique be looking at any of these movie titles through a lens colored out of space? And I would answer that it's highly unlikely. Somewhat annoyingly, however, newer content like *Lovecraft Country* (2020) and *Color Out of Space* (2019) now do give direct credit to Lovecraft himself, but I think there's no way these new "direct" adaptations would exist if not for the groundbreaking works of Gordon, Yuzna, and Paoli, (and to a certain degree Charles Band), who themselves would continue to infuse ideas and themes of Lovecraft's works, specifically the ideas of madness and madhouses, into even their "non"-Lovecraft films like *The Dentist*, *Dolls*, and *King of the Ants*. As a director-for-hire, Stuart Gordon, throughout the final years of his career, would go back to horror material heavily influenced by Lovecraft and Edgar Allan Poe for his important contributions to horror television, via *Masters of*



Horror and Fear Itself (2005-2008); *Dreams in the Witch-House*, *The Black Cat*, and *Eater*, the last of which was some of Gordon's most impressive horror-genre work and saw him directing the then-up-and-comer Elisabeth Moss. Working in the realm of television horror somehow seemed to flow serendipitously with Gordon's latter-career creative head-space, and even though the stories were shorter than full feature films, they were still somehow more thoughtful, more suspenseful, and contained a depth different from his work in feature films. And yet, even these would not have existed had it not been for 1985's *Re-Animator*.

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Our Moment Is Fleeting: Mikey Valentine

By John Carlow

"Our moment is fleeting, under the pale white moonlight."
Devils Highway -Mike Braman (Mikey Valentine)
Switchblade Valentines
(April 5, 1978 – October 27, 2014)

In 2011 I was shooting The Shakedown at the Tavern of the Damned. I was in my usual battle mode fighting with available light. Mike was wandering in and out of the only beam of white on stage. With an early rig and kit lens, I grabbed a frame I still look at and think about to this day. It was a true "eye meets lens" moment. That photo was the closest I ever came to knowing Mike Braman. Mike, like others I've shot on multiple occasions is among those I never officially met or got the chance to know.

The photo with the Sparrow Big Daddy he slung so low on stage, spurred my curiosity about the man so I talked with Mike's wife Trish recently about dropping a few words about his legacy. I've known Trish a few years and after some inquiries, figured out quickly that to tell Mike's story completely would be a book-sized endeavor. During his brief life he simply touched too many souls. For this piece Trish, and I would share a few candid conversations about Mike. I also sought out Dane Loucks (friend, Purrverts, Shakedown, Switchblade Valentines) and curator of Mike's Sparrow guitar. I talked with Billy Bones (Vicious Cycles Motorcycle Club, Sparrow Guitars, Clampdown Record Pressing), Skinny Tim (VCMC and Sparrow Guitars) and Al Murray (friend, Switchblade Valentines, Shakedown, Zap Straps).

I'm not a musician, but wanted to know more about Mike's guitar. When Dane acquired it, he had some repairs done to it. Mike was known for being hard on his guitar. He played it a few times live and has encouraged those who knew Mike to drop in and play it a while. I believe an instrument can possess the spirit of the individual who played it most. Skinny Tim was working at Sparrow when he put together Mike's Big Daddy. He comments, "Truthfully there was nothing so "unique "about the guitar Mike got from us. It was what he did with it that made it unique. Mike took a classic guitar and infused it with so much heart, sweat and bad ass rock and roll style that the guitar became as legendary as the man himself. "Talking more with Tim and Billy, I learned a bit about the fading Big Daddy model. His flat black version was based on the Gretsch 6120, with classic jazz styling "perfect for rockabilly." Mike's guitar bore the Valentines logo, done by Vancouver painter Myk Roc. Both Billy and Tim with the Cycles played with the Valentines a few times and share a deep respect and love for Mike.

A common recollection of those I spoke with about Mike was the signature sound he brought to all his musical projects. (Switchblade Valentines, The Shakedown, Zap Straps, Cheat the Hangman, Blood Moon) I asked Dane to articulate what that sound was. "Mike was into big open chords and really melodic lead lines. I've been playing for years now and could still never write a lead line as melodic. When I first joined the Valentines, he played this solid state, red knob Fender amp that was offensively loud and treble heavy. When I joined The Shakedown him and Nick both played Fender tube combo amplifiers. It was a cleaner, reverbed out sound that relied more on the natural gain of the amps. He had a quick pause in a lot of his songs, like skipping a beat or something. I'm not sure how to explain it." Dane played with Mike in the Valentines for a short while, including an infamous gig in Vancouver opening for the Gutter Demons, where he took over lead vocals. He would go on to join Mike again with The Shakedown for a longer run.

On stage Mike is remembered as larger than life with a confident style and "strong powerful presence," Al Murray remarked, "He couldn't help but be cool." Dane remembers early Valentines shows and thought Mike had the look of "the coolest guy ever." Aidan Engel (Vic City Rejects) recalled the Valentines were the first

show he ever saw as a kid and shares that sentiment. He looked up to Mike and the band. He had the chance years later to play Mike's guitar but never met him again as an adult.

For whatever presence and big sound Mike possessed on stage, it loomed larger than the man himself.

"He was a different person on stage," Dane recalls. Trish summed it up by expressing that, "On stage is who he wanted to be." But in person, Al Murray described him as a soft spoken and private, not prone to gossip or small talk and a true man of few words. "If Mike said something, you knew it had to be important. He was an old soul who just wanted a simple life." Dane remembers his relationship with Mike as one of, "comfortable silence." It was really OK to just sit and not say anything."

Mike hitchhiked to BC from New Brunswick in 2002 with few possessions. Described as not a material person, he placed more value in the people and experiences he was part of. Not much was ever mentioned as far as assets beyond his jacket, boots, bike, few clothes and his guitar. A self-taught musician, it was a skill he would pass along to others. It was remembered he, "couldn't write music as much as he could just play it." When I asked what Mike liked to listen to, Al recalls he had an appreciation for Teenage Head, The Cramps, Demented Are Go and looked up to Stompin Tom Connors. He could breathe and play straight up bar rock and rockabilly with a weave of country combed through.

In a follow up discussion with Trish, I could tell Mike still lives inside awfully close to the surface. As the anniversary of their wedding and his birthday come each year in early April, she remarks it tends to put her in a weird headspace. With a broad smile she shares a joke Mike told her once. "What do you call a guitarist with no girlfriend? Homeless." In trying to encapsulate his life, she went on to explain he was a landscaper, owning a business at one time." He liked to work with his hands. He played his guitar day and night. Rode his bike with The Bombers, a motorcycle club he was one of the original members of. The club has done a few rides honoring Mike on the anniversary of his departure. And he lived to be on stage. He really was everyone's. Not just mine. The friends he made he kept for life. His roots were not in the ground, but in the experiences and memories.



I am grateful for him teaching me about living in the now and being present because the smallest memories can feel so huge. They feel like yesterday. He is very missed."

I look again at the photo that still stirs me. You can't escape his gaze in this frame. Al told me, "if Mike were an animal, he would be a wolf. He had those penetrating blue eyes." Mike's story is one larger than these few words can capture. Trish remarked that, "every life deserves a book." I agree with the sentiment. I'd have to spend a lot more time tracking down and talking with Mike's many friends, family, bandmates and recording endless road stories, to capture all the layers needed. The Valentines crossed Canada twice on tour and I imagine those tours alone would generate a book. So as an outsider, I'm really just scratching the surface, hopefully encouraging those who knew him to bring back a few smiles and stories in his honor.

In December of 2007, the Valentines were interviewed by *Absolute Underground*. A question came up about the longevity of the current lineup at the time. Mike chose to reply to this one and remarked, "Till death do us part." On October 27, 2014, Mike departed for wherever wanderers gather once they leave us. I've always hoped there's a rock and roll heaven myself, for genuine souls like this one.

Trish pauses a moment and with hand over heart and a smile says, "He's not really gone. He lives as long as people remember."

His ashes have been scattered with a few waiting to rest with family land on Mudge Island where Mike's grandpa lives.

"Trapped in an urn is not him," Trish remarks, "He needs to be free."

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INFAMOUS FUCKER RECORDS



Cursed Blessings Records Goes Global

Upstart punk/hardcore/metal indie label Cursed Blessings Records have continued their rapid growth, signing a worldwide digital distribution deal with Montreal's Believe Distribution.

"This deal basically ensures that our bands can be heard by anyone, anywhere at anytime, even if they don't have a record player," said label founder Al Nolan. "Believe is a great company run by great people who I've known personally and professionally for decades. We are very happy."

London, Ontario power-poppers Hellaphant kicked off the global digital launch with their

popular debut Cursed Blessings EP "Crumble" on March 26, 2021 to a "great response," according to label Veep Doug Smart. "Whether it's Spotify, Apple, Deezer, Tidal or wherever else you enjoy music online, you can now have this awesome EP on your favorite digital platform." Hellaphant features a line up of seasoned scenesters, fronted by Gary Begner formerly of Oshawa way-ahead-of-their-time punkers LAME. Driving, riff rockers with sticky sweet hooks and melodies, Hellaphant deliver with this EP, and the world is loving it!

Brantford, Ontario punk veterans Gag Order and their latest EP on Cursed Blessings Records "In My Head," are second in line for digital release followed by Santa Cruz hardcore supergroup Seized Up (featuring members of Bl'ast, Good Riddance, Fast Asleep & The Distillers) and their sophomore release *Marching Down The Spiral* available now on vinyl from the Cursed Blessings website www.cursedblessingsrecords.com



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COMING SOON - TURNTABLES & AUDIO EQUIPMENT



DUST Kickin' Up Some Jaks

Interview with skate legend Tim Hayes by Dustin Jak

AU: What's your handle?

TJ: I inherited Timmo Jak, and Timmo Fakie by default. Music kats have known me as the dude behind the record counter. The pusherman...

AU: First time you ever rode a skateboard?

TJ: First time I jumped on a skateboard was in Aberdeen (born 'n raised) back in '66. I attempted a couple of turns from our steep drive on a neighbour's Daddy Roth-style board with those shitty rattley metal wheels and ate shit.

AU: Where were some of the first cement parks you skateboarded growing up in the 70s?

TJ: On a family vacation in '76 I was dropped off at the Concrete Wave in Anaheim, CA. That was my first taste of made-to-skate concrete. Before that it was just a wood ramp we'd patched together.



was another influence very early on. His style made me want to surf. Waldo Autry, Steve Olson, Micke Alba and Brad Bowman are inspirations as well.

Being completely isolated we only had each other to push what we thought was possible.

AU: What kind of music did you guys listen?

TJ: Fuckin' Nugent, man. Sabbath, Zeppelin, AC/DC, Aerosmith, ZZ Top, Johnny Winter, shit, even some Bob Marley and Peter Tosh. I was always on the lookout for something new and equally as aggro.

The final nail was at a Blue Oyster/Pat Traverse blowout at the Seattle Center Coliseum in '79. Everything about it was lame. A soulless meandering wankfest. I sat there and

thought what the fuck, there has to be something better. Thankfully about this time punk found me.

AU: When do you think it evolved into punk rock and heavy metal and faster stuff?

TJ: Around 79-ish I'd somehow acquired a job at a record store. Sweet job. The manager hated punk though. He'd hand me a stack of promos...

AU: What skateboarders did you look up to?

TJ: It was in Skateboarder Magazine. Coming from a small rain-swamped Northwest town it was our window to the otherside. I was blown away by the Dogtown crew. Alva, Biniak, Shogo... especially Jay Adams. His style, his tricks. Back then all we had were still shots of peak action.

SHRED SESSION

Radio Birdman, etc. and say "get these outta here, never play 'em in the store!" Obviously I snuck in tons of shit to listen to at work. I remember these three kids coming into the store and I'd throw an Adverts or Black Flag record at 'em.

AU: What made you guys want to start a store that sold both records and skateboards?

TJ: I didn't start Fallout but I'm sure it seemed like a natural fit. In '85 I was working at Gregg's Greenlake Cycle in the rental department and skateboard shop with roommate and JAKS brother Joe (Kibourne) and another old JAK, Randy Brown.

On one particular day in '86 Russ asked if I wanted to work there. And within a couple weeks I was baptized... A gift from the skate punk gods.

AU: Tell us more about Fallout .

TJ: Fallout Records and Skateboards quickly became the premier hotspot for alternative culture. Whether it was music, underground publishing (fanzines, books, comics) or skateboards it was all intertwined.

AU: What were some of your more memorable moments in the Seattle skateboarding scene?

TJ: Shit, WAY too many! Learning how to ride a tall transition on our first eight-foot quarter ramp. Soon after, about a 100 or so 12-foot cement pipes were docked at the harbor so we'd do a 40-foot crawl on our stomachs, then madly dash in before the guard truck and dog spotted us.

AU: Favorite Seattle skateboarders?

TJ: Swervo, Jon Miller, Monk, Micro, Ranfro, Mark Holt, Tom Peha, Brice Niebuhr. And younger guns like Max Holbein, Sky Siljeg, Xavier Dettwiler, Nolan Johnson, Lukas Miller.

AU: Any memorable punk rock shows you saw?

- TJ: Again, SO many. But EARLY on there was... 1. Nugent, Cheap Trick, with opening act AC/DC, a band not many had heard at the time, at the Seattle Coliseum in '78. Mind-blowingly kickass! 2. Black Flag with Dez on vocals - at the Showbox in '80



AU: You are part of the Jak's team and also in the band The Fakies, any plans on touring?

TJ: It's the plan. Need to get a few jams in first. We haven't played together since we hightailed it to Victoria and played that crazyass show with ya'll. We had SO much fun and the gig was all for raising dough for the local D.I.Y. cause.

AU: Favourite places to skate these days?

TJ: Locally, I'd say Marginal Way, which is our D.I.Y. Stargate in South Park. Lower Woodland. The fullpipe and pool at Kent 360. Port Townsend is fun. There's a shitload of backyard paradises too.

AU: What are some of your favourite places that you have skated outside of Seattle?

TJ: Mt. Baldy is wonderfully worn with countless decades of wear and tear from water and wheels. It's at a slight downhill, so when ya start deep inside the dark tube it throws ya high as you're speed slalomming through random rocks, piles of shit, dirty underwear.



southern CA. The HUGE one near Houston has multiple pools, a pipe, a ditch that funnels into a halfpipe then into a bowl... it's outrageous! Oregon has too many killer ones to mention. You can cruise down the whole of Oregon's coastline and every 45 minutes there's a five-star park.

Maryhill is a mystical magical place for downhill. Even though the variables change constantly with wind gusts, cow dung, even rattlesnakes, the hill's tight sexy curves are doable at 35-45mph. Just check all the YouTube footy. It's The Fakies mecca.

AU: Happy skateboarding is in the Olympics?

TJ: Happy? No, but it is what it is. I'm guessing it's gonna be like snowboarding, a soulless twisting air show. Skateboarding is about diversity, spontaneity, lip tricks, slides, the works. Not just airs but flow and style. It's the personality and individuality that separates skateboarding from football, baseball, soccer 'n shit. All I can



say is, with ALL this new revenue the Olympics will bring to our lifestyle, the kids better be buying their shit from local skateshops if there is one. Remember... it's the Olympics that needs skateboarding, skateboarding doesn't need the Olympics.

AU: Are you glad to see that skateboards and music still go hand in hand?

TJ: They always will. They're both a vehicle of expression. It's art.

AU: Any final messages for our young readers?

TJ: Skateboarding is a tool for possibilities. It will teach you about yourself. That you can go beyond your physical and mental limitations. I've been skating for 46 years now... and am 61 years old. Let's see how far we can take this beautiful ride!

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Phil Terris

Interview by Ira Hunter

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are your talents?

Phil Terris: My name is Phil Terris. Art, music, gaming.

AU: What shop do you work at and where is it located?

PT: I work at East Van Inc Tattoo, located at 1839 Commercial Drive. Vancouver B.C.

AU: What makes East Van Inc Tattoo unique?

PT: I feel what makes East Van Inc unique is the diversity and passion that our team of artists and staff bring to the table, not to mention all of our amazing clients and the community that surrounds us.

AU: Who else works at East Van Tattoo and what are their strong points artistically?

PT: I work with four other amazing artists:

Vicky, who does beautiful detail oriented work from realism to traditional, black and grey or color tattoos.

Kyle, specializes in large scale black and grey tattoos with a lot of attention to detail and flow from realism to Japanese style tattoos.

Chanton is also another well rounded artist, he does amazing black and grey realism pieces with a bit of aboriginal flavorings that make his work super cool and unique.

Sarah just finished her apprenticeship and does very crisp, clean and colorful tattoos.

AU: How long have you been an artist? How did you get

started tattooing?

PT: I have been into art and music since I was a little kid. In my younger years I was more drawn towards music but I always loved drawing and being creative in general.

At one time, I had lost my way in life and ended up down the road of drug abuse where I made some bad decisions and found myself doing time in jail.

While I served my time I spent a lot of it drawing, I remember I had a couple of tattoo magazines and I would practice drawing the tattoos I saw in the

magazines on envelopes.

Someone showed me how to make a tattoo machine out of a discman motor and a pen and after I tried it out on myself I was instantly hooked...

After playin' around with it a little on myself, I quickly made another set up

and tattooed some simple freehand skulls on my cellmate and next thing I knew I had a lineup of people willing to donate their skin for me to practice on.

After completing my sentence, my main goal became to get a job, get a tattoo kit and work my way into the industry and after a couple years I got my chance to work in a small shop in Surrey where I spent a few more years before moving to East Van Inc Tattoo which has been my home for the last eight years.

AU: What was the first tattoo you received and what was the first tattoo you did on someone else?

PT: The first tattoo I ever got was the logo that was on my saxophone in high school which was an earth with a music staff and notes coming off of it. The first would have been the skull tattoos I mentioned before.

AU: What styles would you say you specialize in? What are some of the major influences on your artistic style?

PT: I am comfortable in most styles but I tend to gravitate towards realism and Japanese style tattoos with a touch of abstract and geometrical design aspects.

AU: Does your art lean towards the side of Unicorns or Demons?



PT: I think I am somewhere in the middle.

AU: Do tattoos always have to have a deep meaning or can it be solely about the art?

PT: No not always, there are people out there who just like to collect awesome artwork but I think deep down the wearer has some

sort of meaning to why/what they get tattooed.

AU: Absolute Craziest Tattoo you've ever done?

PT: I haven't really done any super crazy tattoos in my time tattooing.... yet. I have had some strange requests as I am sure most artists have, but nothing super crazy.

AU: Any favourite types of music you



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SHADOW CABINET WITH GRAYSON CALIGARI:

Eight gothic albums that flew under the radar

By Grayson Caligari

With so much access to music, it can often be daunting to sift through it all and find new songs to enjoy. With that in mind, I present eight great goth albums that flew under the radar. These are not listed in any particular order and is by no means exhaustive. Any fan of dark music will find at least one new album to enjoy. The two common factors of these albums is repeat listenability and ease of finding them on streaming services.

The first is *Carnival of Souls* by Miranda Sex Garden. Released in 2000, This is an eccentric journey into musically complex female fronted gothic rock. The band draws from classical, jazz, and 90s goth rock to bring intricate sound that deals with BDSM, horror, and beauty. The whole record sounds intimidating and also gentle. Yet it maintains just the right touch of unhinged Byronic libertine.

Next up is *Return to the Breath* by Autumn, also from 2000. One of the things that typified 90s goth was the juxtaposition of heavy aggressive tones with smooth melodically complex vocals. But unlike a metal band, Autumn uses smooth blends in their sounds to explore death and discomfort within a calculated mixture of post-punk and impassioned female vocals. There's a charming folk undertone to the whole album but

it drips with darkness and sorrow. From 2007, *A Very Strange Site in The Distance* by Submarine Fleet, is a perfect blend of psychedelic textures and goth rock accessibility. If you love Pink Floyd and Joy Division, here you have a band that draws from both and sounds like neither. Submarine Fleet's Mark Linder should go on the list of one of the greatest vocalists of rock music. The layers of sonic wonder swirl around the listener. The dash of shoe-gaze guitar serves to add the last bit of icing to this audio delight.

Does it get any more goth than an band named Mors Syphilitica, Latin for "death out of syphilis"? Their album *Feather and Fate* from 2001 is a masterpiece. Operatic vocals play off a bass-fronted rich tapestry of dark rock that draws from unexpected places. Only a band like this could use banjo in a song and still sound gothic AF. Both sensual and confrontational, Mors Syphilitica deserve recognition as a groundbreaking music group. Complex atypical drum rhythms round out this wonderful band.

IV by Qntal could easily be called medieval gothic were it not for the heavy use of synths and dance beats. Qntal incorporate German, Latin, and English operatic vocals. Songs like "Blac" are sure to pack a dance floor of any romantic goths. But even jaded rivet heads may appreciate the juxtaposition of industrial sounds with a medieval sonic pallet. Celtic overtones and a unique touch and solidify Qntal as one of the best goth bands of all time.

If you love neo-folk and shoe-gaze and don't know *Tripping Back into the Broken Days* by Lycia,

you are in for a treat. Released in 2002, it has an almost sludge metal overtone but with a folk music dream quality. Their music sounds like walking through a snow covered forest feels. Fans of dreamy dark acoustic music are sure to feel at home in this introspective landscape. The band uses both male and female vocals while acoustic guitars play off of bright pad synths. Lycia are must listen for any goth or post-punk fan.

Long Ago and Far Away by The Shroud epitomizes gothic rock. Released in 1996, It's everything a trad goth could want: melodic female vocals, occult themes, and authentic morbidity. Each song on the album speaks to the libertine and the

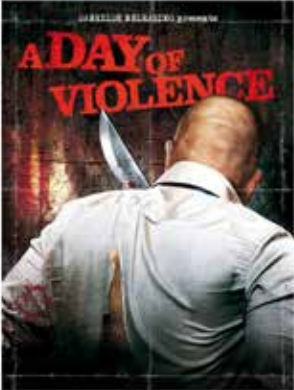
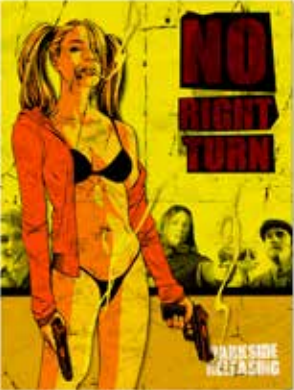
lost soul. You can almost feel the soft velvet and smell the overgrown graves as you listen to this. If you love witchcraft and literary romance the Shroud is your band.

In 2007 *Tearwave* was released by Tearwave. The rich sonic palette of distorted guitars and complex break-beat rhythms meld beautifully with reverb drenched vocals. This album is masterful mix of aggression and mellowness intertwined. Fans of Slowdive will feel at home here. Heavy yet unobtrusive drums lay down the foundation of relaxing sounds that demand to be played at high volumes. This is an album you blast to the befuddlement of your neighbours.

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Words with Snowy Shaw

By Erik Lindholm

Absolute Underground: Good day sir, set the scene for us. Where are you now? What is the weather like outside your window? What is in your cup at the moment?

Snowy Shaw: I'm home safely at the Hellhaus of Hising-Island, Gothenburg Sweden and the weather is, I assume pretty similar to what you guys have in Canada. In my cup at the moment on this cozy Sunday evening is chocolate milk after having a nice home-cooked meal of cheese burgers, sweet potato fries and the whole shebang.

AU: We are gathered here today to discuss your new book, *The Book Of Heavy Metal*. And what a tome it is! It spans decades of your life... so many stories! How did you think to piece the book together and share the stories you chose? Can't imagine what got cut and left on the editor's floor...

SS: Oh! thank you. Yeah, the reception's been nothing short of fantastic and I couldn't be possibly be any happier. Well, maybe if it was a #1 best seller in *New York Times* hahaha! It's been selling great though worldwide, this self published limited hardback edition that is, so I have absolutely no complaints.

How I pieced it together etc. Like you say, a long adventurous and eventful life how do one boil that down to 450 pages? I'd spend a decade off and on between tours and so on writing this thing and ended up selecting the stories that I found interesting in a good mix of highs and lows from a personal point of view from childhood and career. Obviously some parts were left out for one or the other reason, but from the get-go I was adamant that I wanted to spill the beans and tell it like it is,

the uncensored, unpleasant and often awkward truth. That's also one of the things that I've received a lot of credit and praise for. Being so open-hearted and revealing what goes on behind the scenes in this make believe industry called the showbiz, as opposed to the hide-biz. In short, this is no fairy-tale nor any typical Hollywood rock biography with romanitized tales about sex, drugs and rock n' roll (although you get your fair share of that too, of course).

AU: Who designed it with you? The graphic layout, added photos, comics and fonts really add to the experience.

SS: As always, I design it all myself. Like I explain more in the book, it may have taken me a while to fully grasp and work up the confidence to do it all myself but I always had a very clear and distinct vision of what I wanted in my creations and over time learned that it's probably easier that I do it myself that to verbally try to explain to others exactly how I want it done. That's also why I play all instruments and sing, as well as write, produce and design it all myself. In short, everything you see and hear is done by myself. So I'm the one to blame whether you if you like it and loathe it.

AU: What was your aim with the book? Who did you want to reach to and communicate with?

SS: Hmm, good question. I can't say I really had any specific well thought-out plan like a target market or anything along those lines. With my background in all those bands I guess



I just assumed that those fans would be the first immediate readers, or people that enjoy reading a good and exciting lifestory and rock autobiographies in general. Needless to say, I have never written let alone published a book before, and to be perfectly honest I haven't read an awful lot of books either. It started out as a home-made sort of therapy that I came up with to cope with a severe midlife crisis after I had turned 40. Rather than jumping from the bridge or spending a fortune on shrinks I figured putting black on white would grant me the perspective

and objectivity to come to terms with all my inner demons and ruminations. To my great surprise it actually worked since I was brutally honest, truthful and didn't hold anything back. I think the proper term is catharsis, or as I say mental enema. And from there on it morphed into keeping a journal while on tours etc, which then later spilled into an autobiography after it occurred to me that, "Perhaps others would like to read about my lifelong struggle with all the ups and downs in my rock n' rollercoaster."

Having zero previous experience or technique from the artform of writing, there was obviously a lot of trial and error involved but as always I just followed my heart and tried to live up to my own standards, the way I would have wanted it if I was to buy an autobiographical book by some interesting character. That too goes for design, content and everything. I do it my way.

AU: Some incriminating and awesome backstage stories are here... get any blowback from those you mentioned in off colour tales? You know the saying "Sometimes silence says more than a thousand words" right?

SS: So far, I haven't got any negative feedback from the people included in the book. However, the day after Candlemass/Memento Mori singer Messiah Marcolin got the book, I noticed how he and his wife had removed me from Facebook. I'm just telling the truth, and apparently not all people are equipped to handle it. That being said, this is certainly no vendetta where I'm trying to get back on people or anything like that, that'd be a pathetic lowblow. To the best of my recollection I'm telling it like it was, my version of the truth and whatever went down in my narrative.

AU: Gothenburg is home. What is distinct about the city to you?

SS: What can I say? This where I grew up and where I still live but for the past 30 + years I've worked all over the world, more or less. Gothenburg is historically a strong blue collar working class city with ship wharfs and industries like the original Volvo factory etc. Since the past 25 years or so the Gothenburg Death Metal Sound has been a worldwide phenomenon and it has a pretty strong music scene. I've sometimes made the comparison to Birmingham, England where heavy metal was born via Black Sabbath, Judas Priest, half Zeppelin etc. I suppose the more rough unpolished environment creates more grounded and hardcore people as well as music.

AU: What is the best Canadian city for you?

SS: I'd love to see and spend more time in Canada in the future. So far I've mainly played the main cities like Toronto , Montreal, Vancouver, etc and loved it. I've had nothing but good experiences of Canada in all the years.

AU: You've played in a ton of bands – Dimmu Borgir, Mercyful Fate, Dream Evil, Therion – many many more - what do you think is "key" in making your time in a band your own, making your mark, your signature – regardless of instrument? In other words, how "best" to be in a band?

SS: Hmm, I dunno. I'd say I'm not trying to be anything than myself and make my own interpretation of it based on my own set of useful influences, whether we're talking glam rock or black metal or any of all the various styles or subgenres in between. With Dream Evil for example, I made my own thing musically in my writing based on a mixed inspirations from Manowar and Scorpions, mostly.

AU: Your best, favourite piece of musical gear - you own and why is it so?

SS: There are a lot of gear-sluts out there, but I'm certainly not one of them. I'm very grateful to my endorsers Tama drums, Ibanez guitars & basses, Evans Heads, Istanbul Mehmet cymbals, who provide me with some of the greatest equipment on the market. As much as I appreciate their support, I don't put a lot fixation on the equipment itself. I consider it as instruments for my creativity, like tools, plain & simple. Therefore I tend to stick to the same old stuff that I've had for years and that works for whatever I'm after musically. I generally live by the motto, "If it ain't broken- don't fix it!" For studio computer and recording devices I'm using Cubase and I've even turned off the internet just because I don't feel I have much need for updates in the kind of music I'm recording. In fact I flat out hate those obligatory updates every so often. Imagine if I

carpenter would have to relearn how to use the hammer or electric saw once every month.

AU: How has 2020 and COVID-19/economic shift affected your thinking? What do you think the trend is as we go into 2021, for metal musicians and the underground?

SS: I discuss this matter practically every day with friends and colleagues. Needless to say there's a massively big concern about it as our whole existence is threatened. What to me is mind



boggling is that a lot of people seem rather naive about the whole thing where they say they can't wait for the vaccine and the whole pandemic shit to blow so things can go back to normal. Normal? I say. You really think it was that great in 2019? It's not gonna make a quantum leap back to 1988. The music industry for rock/metal is basically dead, with emphasis on industry as in a livelihood or main source of income for musicians.

We're facing the New World Order, The fourth industrial revolution, The great reset or whatever you wanna call it. The old times won't come back again and what was relevant in the past has little relevance in the future. I believe there's a whole other agenda and interest behind this whole man-made catastrophe than what's reported. I always say that if you wanna solve a mystery, follow the money. Who's got the most to gain from it, is usually the answer.

I'm currently working on this project where I release one song per month digitally throughout 2021 called, "This is Heavy Metal, plain & simple," for which I invite a lot of my teenage heroes, living legends, former bandmates and friends to participate and sing with me or share a guitar solo. It's a tribute to 50 years of a music style that dictated, shaped and formed our lives, and I fear that this might be the end of an era where everything is more or less primarily based on nostalgia.

AU: I thank you for writing such a revealing book and sharing your story with the world. And sharing your time with us to talk about it!

SS: Anytime man, it was all my pleasure. Thank you

AU: Last words to heavy metal Canadians who are ready to rock n' roll when this plague lifts:

SS: Honest to God, Canada is on my list of 'places to check out more' in my search of possible places to relocate to as I'm sick and tired of Sweden. So I can't wait to spend more time and travel around a bit more like you never have the chance to while touring a country. Hadn't it been for the damn pandemic I would have done so last year since I already had a handful of shows planned with my Book Signing Event tour, a more intimate thingy where I'd meet fans, sign books, play a couple of songs semi-acoustically and do Q&A's, shake hands, sell merch and so on in smaller venues, book/record stores and similar like Hardrock Cafés etc. This would have started late May 2020 in Europe and then I'd head over the pond by August to do North America then South America later on, but as we all know something happened that put a halt and ruined everything for everyone indefinitely. The intention is to pick it up once the plague, like you put it, blows over and now since a few months back the US plan for March 2021 was postponed until the second half of the year instead. No one can tell or make any concrete plans in the current situation. Let's stay healthy and keep our fingers crossed, and support the artists you like because otherwise there's a fat chance they won't be around once it blows over and that's the harsh reality of the situation. Is this the death-knell to heavy metal?

Let's not hope so, shall we?

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By Steve Bailey

NEOS

THERE IS NO FUTURE

The NEOS came into being on December 22, 1979. It was the first day of a two-week Christmas break from our junior high school and my best friend Dave and I were on a mission to write and record punk rock songs. We would return to school reborn as adolescent punk missionaries spreading the gospel of the Clash, the Sex Pistols and D.O.A. to anyone who would listen (which turned out to be pretty much no one).

MOTOR-MOUTHED VIRGINS

While the culture wars raged in our school halls, and insults and fists flew back and forth, I was focused on putting together a proper band. This would require a drummer – a very special drummer. If the NEOS are remembered for anything it's being early adopters of high-speed punk. There weren't any labels for that style of music in 1979 so I won't give it one now. I was inspired by bands that played fast at the time like the Dickies, D.O.A. and the Dead Kennedys, but I wasn't trying to emulate them. I didn't have the musical chops to follow in their footsteps; in any case I wanted to take punk energy to another plane.

"AB" and I had been acquaintances since elementary school but we weren't close friends. I'd heard that he'd driven the school music teacher crazy in grade 7. As the "snare" player for the band, his job was to set the tempo and keep it locked in. The problem was that whatever tempo the song started at AB would have doubled it by the end of the tune leaving the 12-year-old flute and clarinet players in total disarray and the teacher in a fury. These credentials sounded very promising to me.

For AB and me, playing fast wasn't so much a plan as an inevitability. We were both hyperactive, motor-mouthed virgins overflowing with teenage hormones and repressed rage. We didn't so much walk down the halls at school as bounce from wall



to wall, and in class we vibrated in our seats.

By the end of Grade 9 I had found the drummer, and by pure dumb luck he would turn out to be a musician who would help to influence future genres of music. I was 15 at the time and he was only 14.

WHERE'S MY SID?

Dave, who I'd started the band with, didn't last long after AB joined. Dave's teenage passion ran towards sports and girls, while being in the NEOS was more a life of musical monasticism. I became screamer-in-chief when Dave left. Shortly after Dave left we added Gary, our first bass player, to the lineup. Gary had just moved to Victoria from an incredibly tough village in Scotland called Cowdenbeath, showing up at our school mid-term in 1980. He noticed that I had the Skids' band logo scrawled on my math notebook and inquired in his thick Scottish brogue, "how the fuck I would know the name of some shite punk band that played the local pub in his old hometown." He thought I was taking the piss out of him, especially as he imagined the Skids had never been heard outside of Fife. We were both floored by this bizarre coincidence and we became fast friends. He didn't care much for punk but he loved to fight and chase girls, and he figured being in a punk band might be a good way to pursue these interests.

A REAL BAND

When Kev Smith replaced Gary on bass in the spring of 1981 we became a "real" band. AB was 15, I was 16 and Kev was the wise old man closing in on 17. He had seen our first show and hunted us down at a subsequent punk

gig, telling us we were great but we needed a real bass player – him. He had a bit more confidence and experience than either of us and for the first time we had someone who actually wanted to practise and write songs. Gary never really committed to the band, preferring more alluring pursuits such as cars and girls. We hadn't quite gotten around to telling him about our new bass player when he unexpectedly showed up at our rehearsal space one day only to find Kev standing in his place. To his credit, Gary took it pretty well and Kev wasn't subjected to a vicious headbutt or boot to the groin.

On August 1, 1981, we played our second-ever show, the first with Kev in the lineup. The Infamous Scientists (Andy Kerr and Kev Lee's band) headlined and it was also the debut gig for NoMeansNo. NMN had released two 7" records prior to this, but their incredible debut album *Mama* had not yet come out. They were a two-piece bass-and-drums combo with drummer John occasionally switching to keyboards. They played a kind of music that none of us had ever heard – a wild mix of punk, jazz, funk and god knows what

with intelligent, intricate lyrics all delivered with intensity, accuracy and power.

Fortunately, the Victoria punk scene has always been relatively open, musically speaking, and they were immediately embraced. I saw them perform many times as a two-piece before our friend Andy Kerr joined them in 1983, propelling them from incredible to unbelievable. What an honor to have known them and witnessed their performances during those years.

WRIGHT THIS WAY

On September 11, 1981 (exactly two decades before the infamous 9/11 attacks) we recorded the bed tracks for our first 7" record, which we would later name *End All Discrimination*. Rob Wright (of NoMeansNo) transported Subterranean Studios' equipment to my parents' basement for the session. He set up a half-dozen cheap mics around us and told us to play our set. Vocals would be recorded later – some of the songs didn't have complete lyrics yet and with my outlook on the world rapidly changing I was feeling unsure about many of the lyrics I had written.

The plan was for Rob to roll the tape while we ran through our songs but nerves made us screw up a couple of times so he'd stop, rewind the tape to the beginning of the last song and press Record again. Embarrassed that the recording had taken 30 minutes instead of the planned 15, we thanked him on the sleeve for "waiting for us to get it right." When I took up recording in later years there were times I spent hours while someone tried to get one solo or vocal part right. Thank god that concept was completely foreign to us at the time and the record accurately captured how we sounded, warts and all.

ARGH FUCK KILL

We soon had the finished materials in hand ready to be folded, assembled and stuffed into plastic sleeves. Around March 1982, *End All Discrimination* was ready to be released and, we assumed simultaneously, laid to rest, as we expected there to be zero interest in it. We took half a dozen copies down to Richard's Records

and sent a few to Zulu Records in Vancouver. Sales didn't explode even after we managed to get reviewed by Alex Varty in Vancouver's trend-setting arts magazine *The Georgia Straight*. Alex raved, "God, Victoria must be boring if this is what kids are into. Drab heavy-metal punk, some no-mind glue-head doing an early Joey Shithead impersonation, and argargaaah fuck fuck kill lyrics. This ain't anarchy, this is wankery." We were all pretty excited to get trashed in such an influential publication. I believe this was the inspiration for the Dayglo Abortions' song "Argh Fuck Kill" released a few years later.

THERE'S ALWAYS ROOM FOR JELLO

Out of the stack of 500 copies of *End All Discrimination*, we gave a dozen to friends and managed to sell another dozen through local record shops that carried homegrown releases. Richard's posted the terrible Georgia Straight review right above the record in the hopes of boosting sales. It didn't work and the remaining 475 sat in boxes until we decided it might be fun to send a couple to the bands that had inspired us. This wasn't an attempt to get noticed, just a way to thank the artists we loved and let them know what kind of demented offspring they had birthed.

The two records I distinctly remember sending out went to Rudimentary Peni and the Dead Kennedys. I had recently come into possession of Rudimentary Peni's first 7" and was completely obsessed with it. I still believe it is one of the most bizarre, intense, intelligent, and beautiful pieces of art to emerge from the second wave of punk. I was astonished when the band's leader, Nick Blinko, wrote back. He turned out to be everything you would expect from his music, a genius and a lunatic, and very kind. He even sent a small piece of hand-drawn art in that unmistakable Blinko style.

While the response from Nick to our meagre offering was received by all of us with surprise and joy, the response from Jello Biafra was astonishing. Jello's music, lyrics, and persona had a huge influence on me. With the Sex Pistols disbanded and the Clash dismissed by punk puritans, the Dead Kennedys were the biggest name around. This was the period right between *Fresh Fruit for Rotting Vegetables* and *Plastic Surgery Disasters*, and I did not expect that my fan letter and DIY EP would elicit any kind of response from them. We were in complete shock when Jello responded to my

fan letter. Not only had he received the record, he had actually listened to it AND he wanted to help us be heard beyond our hometown. He asked if we would be interested in having him arrange distribution for 300 copies of *End All Discrimination* through Systematic/Rough Trade.

OH HELL YA!

I am certain that Jello's enthusiasm and connections are the only reason we were ever heard outside of Victoria. The distributor was fantastic and sent us full payment as soon as they received the records. A positive review in *Maximum Rocknroll* and the general support of



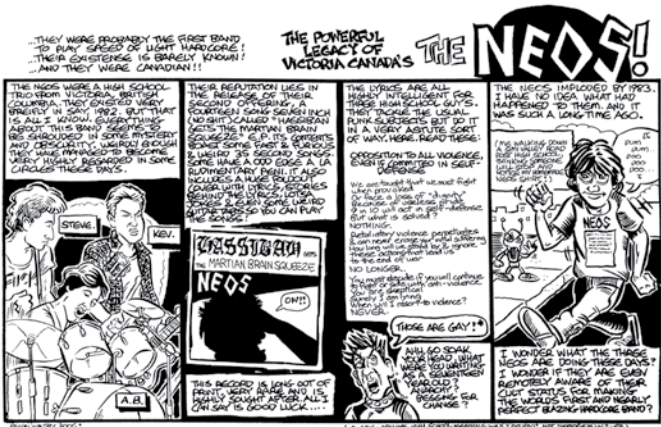
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its editor Tim Yohannan also helped the records sell and raised interest in the band. The rest of the records we sold or gave away over the next year.

HELLBENT ON SPEED

With the limited time allotted for us to make our ungodly noise, there was minimal opportunity to warm up before the race so we developed silent rituals to prepare. It often started with riding a bike to rehearsal with a thick winter jacket on to get the sweat flowing and the muscles juiced. This could be followed by a few races up and down the stairs to raise core temperature and heart rate, but most importantly the room had to be as hot as possible, which we sometimes achieved by plugging in electric space heaters and facing them toward the band. Even set to maximum, they would often cut out halfway through the rehearsal when the room temperature rose beyond the maximum allowed by the heaters’ safety circuits. I suppose the concept was a bit like hot yoga, though none of us had heard of it at the time. AB’s bedroom became known as “The Sweatbox,” with the windows and walls dripping with our condensed teenage lather during intense rehearsals.

THE GODFATHER

On September 18, 1982, we recorded *Hassibah Gets the Martian Brain Squeeze* at Hole in the Wall Studios with Scott Henderson. The studio was so named because of a large hole in the wall that looked as though someone had been thrown through it. This was a reasonable hypothesis as Scott had a habit of renting homes that had been recently vacated by bikers, drug dealers, or both. These structures were already so derelict on move-in day that you would assume Scott’s lifestyle couldn’t render them into any lower state of being, but this assumption fails to give credit



almost exactly a year after recording *End All Discrimination*, we were ready to roll, with Scott grinning ear to ear and our friend Pete Ellis snapping a few shots for posterity. This time we did the vocals live and it worked out much better (with the exception of “Jungle Beat” and “Ambitious,” as there was no way that AB could sing while playing drums like that). The entire recording took about half an hour, with the instruments on a pair of tracks and vocals on a third track. With one empty track remaining on the four-track reel-to-reel, Scott asked if we wanted to do any overdubs. Nope.

Kev wrote sarcastically in the liner notes that it was “recorded in goddam incredible, all-encompassing, sensurround-sound so be careful.” For better or worse, the recording is a perfect replica of what we sounded like playing a rehearsal at that time and we were pleased with the result and proud of that honesty. To top it off, Scott had a half-inch 2-track machine so he was able to immediately transfer the “mix” onto a master tape we could take directly to the pressing plant thereby avoiding another visit to the shitbirds at Keye Recording.

HASSIBAH GETS THE MARTIAN BRAIN SQUEEZE!

With the recording in hand we set to work on the cover art and liner notes for *Hassibah Gets the Martian Brain Squeeze*. If you’re wondering what this insane multisyllabic moniker means, you have to step inside the mind of drummer AB Normal. Thank god I climbed down off my pedestal for once and let him take charge of naming this release because no doubt I’d have called it something like *The Blackness That Envelopes You Will Soon Eat Your Soul and Shit You into the Void*. I can only imagine what the accompanying artwork might have been. We decided that for fun each band member would be given space on the record sleeve to explain the meaning of the record title, with Kev and I pursuing something more absurd than literal. I thought maybe I’d take this opportunity for a shot at a clearer explanation.

Hassibah was one of a host of creatures and characters that inhabited AB’s mythical world. Maybe he connected on a genetic level to the wonderfully creative pantheon of his ancient Greek ancestors, or maybe he was just a super-wacky, highly creative lunatic.

The Martian Brain Squeeze was AB’s patented murder move. While other boys were perfecting

to a man who has caused more homes to be condemned and demolished in Victoria than many of our gentrifying developers. Today his studio is called “Sea of Shit,” named because the floor used to be thickly carpeted with fresh dog turds that you had to contort your limbs and perform the occasional grand jeté to make it across the room sans feces.

Half an hour after arriving, and

their purple nurples and wet willies, AB came up with his own friend-fight manoeuvre that went straight for the brain. It was simple enough. Grab your opponent by the skull by wrapping your hand around the front of his head, with your thumb on one temple and your fingers on the other temple. Now squeeze as hard as possible until brain damage is achieved, grey matter starts bubbling out of your opponent’s nose, and a slow painful death follows. That was the theory anyway. It never got taken that far; after a few brain-squeeze battles with willing opponents resulted in headaches and nausea lasting several hours, it was generally decided that this move should be reserved for someone you actually wanted to kill and not simply a revenge move for a surprise gonch pull. There was also the metaphysical aspect of the brain squeeze. If the gods were displeased with you, they might reach down from Olympus or Valhalla (or wherever they might be hanging out) and cover your head with an invisible hand, then administer a painful grip to crush your mind and make you beg for death. The cover image for *Hassibah* is a picture I took of AB giving himself the brain squeeze in silhouette in front of my bedroom window. The liner notes for *Hassibah* must have confounded just about anyone who tried to make sense of them. Along with the usual thank-yous, band pictures, and lyric sheets were family photos (including one of me potty training), cartoons, collages, in-jokes, essays, and strangest of all music notation (of sorts) for all the songs.

BEETHOVEN, BLACK SABBATH AND LITTLE STEVIE WONDER WALK INTO A BAR TOGETHER

... At this point we were 17–19 years old. We had put the more childish elements of punk behind us and detested the claustrophobic rules that seemed to dominate many elements of the scene. We didn’t dress like punks anymore, had stopped cutting our hair, and weren’t even listening to that much punk music anymore. Our musical tastes were growing ever further apart but we tried to support each other by allowing anyone to bring anything into the band and give it a shot. I wanted to bring more of the classical music I was listening to into our sound so I adapted a musical piece that we referred to as “Beethoven Beginning.” It morphed highly simplified elements of the first and third movements of Beethoven’s “Moonlight Sonata” into a short punk song. I was always a terrible lead guitarist and could barely even play the basic parts I’d written. I always fantasized about learning to play the entire third movement on guitar and while I never even really tried I was thrilled a couple of years ago when I stumbled across “Ludwig van Beethoven – Moonlight Sonata (3rd Movement) Tina S Cover” on YouTube. This is what I wanted the NEOS to become. So deluded!

I also started attempting to write slower, more traditional punk songs including “AM Radio Song.” The moniker being the shot I took at myself for coming up with something so poppy. The song title was actually “What’s the Use of Trying?” The lyrics were filled with self-reprisal about reaching a point in life where I no longer had the strength to address the problems I saw in the world, instead focused on the basic need for self-preservation.

Kev was listening to a lot of metal and some

classical guitar music. This was the point in the band when we should have switched instruments because he was writing material I really couldn’t play on guitar. Luckily he came up with some melodic punk that was super cool and fun to play with titles like “Livin’ off Cat Food,” his take on what life would soon be like as he prepared to leave his parents’ home. I felt that his new songs were our best ever and I wish we’d had a chance to record them properly.

On the other hand, AB was eschewing rock’n’roll altogether and embracing funk and soul. He was obsessed with Little Stevie Wonder’s 1963 hit “Fingertips” and other R&B and soul recordings of that era. He wrote a couple of songs in this vein and tried to teach Kev and me how to play drums and guitar for them so he could sing. He’d always sung a couple of songs in our set while Kev played drums (“Ambitious” from *Hassibah* being an example), but we were pretty hopeless at learning this genre that was totally foreign to us and sadly these songs never quite made it into our set. Playing “Beethoven Beginning” in the middle of a gig was confusing enough for a hardcore audience; I can’t imagine what a little punk R&B might have done to them.

I can’t decide whether the NEOS transforming into a classical-metal-electro-pop-funk-punk band would have been the coolest thing ever or a complete abomination. I have a hunch, but we’ll never know as we were about to set out on our only tour, an adventure that would prove fatal for the band.



EPILOGUE

Even when we were active I could never understand why anyone outside of a small circle of friends would care about the NEOS. It is completely shocking to me that 40 years later anyone remembers we existed. When you come from where we come from, and play the music we played, your only expectation is to be despised and forgotten. We didn’t do much to promote ourselves. We pressed 500 copies each of our two 7” records (because that was the fewest the plant would produce) and expected to sell a handful locally. In four years we played 10 shows in our hometown and only four shows outside Victoria. To our complete shock, we were noticed by a few influential people who were very kind to us and through them became known to a small family of freaks and fans around the world. My thanks to the NEOS family: AB, Kev, Jay, and Gary, and of course to all the Victoria punks who spat on us, threatened us, and cheered us on –often all at once.

Editing: Jason Flower

Copy editing: Frank Manley

NEOS cartoon: Brian Walsby

Photos & archival material: Steve Bailey, Kev Smith, Jacqueline McLaughlin, Ricky Long, Russ Beinder, Steve Sandve, Pete Ellis, Kev Lee, Graham Caverhill.

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Tommy Chong

Every Day is 420

Interview by Iree-I

Absolute Underground: Hello Tommy Chong, this is going to be our 420 issue. Last time I talked to you was for our Tommy Chong Christmas issue. Back then you were just in the process of moving away from Vancouver. I was just wondering if you regretted that decision when COVID happened? I was curious you would have rather been stuck in Canada?



if

Tommy Chong: Oh no, I'm really happy I was in L.A. when the COVID hit. Because you know I've never spent a year in my house in my life until last year, and I really enjoy it. Wow, it's beyond vacation time, because when you're working live, it's not pretty. As much as I enjoy performing, I'm enjoying doing cameos and sitting at home. Waking up when I feel like it. I'll wake up and I'll go, "Oh I think I'll go back to sleep," and I'll go back to sleep and it's incredible. I'm with my wife, I've never really been with my wife the whole year, just her and I, until now. It's incredible, I'm enjoying it. When you grow up in Canada, the thought of Hollywood is so far away. Then when it looked like I was going to be playing music in the States. I started reading up about California and I started going, "Oh, this could be a nice place." and next thing you know, I'm living here. I've been here over half my life now. Yeah, of course there's the COVID going around, but everything's going around, you know? When I was born, I never saw

my mother. She ended up with TB. That was the virus at that time TB when I was a kid. I ended up in the hospital with pleurisy. We never really got a family unit together until I was six years old. Then we stayed together until I left. But I'm enjoying my life, as I always have.

AU: How have you been staying busy creatively?

TC: Oh creatively man, I've been working, I've been drawing, I learned how to draw my face. I'm not a bad artist, I have skills. I've been doing some self examination, and I realize, one of my weaknesses is also my strength. Which is, I'm not really good at any one thing. But I can do a lot of different things. I do a lot of thinking and a lot of writing. I just started pondering over different scenarios of society and it's all changing and it's changing for the good. Like historically, they talk about Jesus. When you look at all the churches in Europe, Jesus is this really tall handsome white guy, with a brown beard. But then you look at history and he was a little brown Jew from Nazareth.

AU: Do you think that Jesus was a stoner? The burning bush?

TC: No, that was Moses with the burning bush. Oh Moses, for sure. Moses was a warrior. He was definitely a stoner. Jesus? Very possible, because he was a naturalist and herbalist and I wouldn't put it past him. For sure.

AU: What do you know about the origins of



420?

TC: I heard that these guys at Berkeley University started it up, school got out at 4:00 so they would meet for 4:20 at a place where they would go get high. That became the code, "420?" "Okay, I'll meet you there." That's what I heard.

AU: Why do you think that cannabis was used for 1000s of years for all these reasons, and then all of a sudden, it was thrown into the dark ages, and people lost all of the knowledge of its good uses. For me it took Jack Herer's book, *The Emperor Wears No Clothes* to start to bring some of that history back.

TC: Marijuana was always used by the indigenous, by the natives. The Chinese had it in their book of herbs as a cure for menstrual cramps, as well as cancer, they knew about it fighting cancer. The Chinese had a written language way before anybody. So that's how we know about that, their use there. It's always been in North America.

I don't know how it got here, probably some travellers brought the seeds. It was called loco weed down in the south of Texas and places like that. Anywhere they had livestock in open fields. The hemp plant grew wild, but they call it loco weed and the horses loved it, the cows loved it. They would get stoned and they would act crazy. The Mexicans, the indigenous again, there is no drugstore and so they used the marijuana. Especially the Chicanos, the workers, that's how they relaxed and that's how they survived and prospered in America.

Hemp as as industrial plant, like Jack's book said, was incredibly cheap to grow, and it had so many uses. When the plastic industry came along and the oil industry, and they could make plastic rope out of oil, you know, wow. Now they had to get rid of hemp because the plastic rope was inferior to hemp products. Even the plastic today, hemp is still superior in so many ways. For paper, for all sorts of goods. If we had stayed on the hemp thing we wouldn't have the problems that we have today with plastic covering the world.

It's a magical plant. Now that it is legal we're going to go back to the hemp world again. What we have to do, as a human race, is that we have to prepare ourselves for peace. It's gonna be a paradise, the whole world, that's what we're looking at.

AU: What are your feelings about legalization and how it's been handled? Is there anything that can still be improved upon?

TC: It can really be improved upon, All they have to do is look at how we used to run it with the black market. The black market took it down to basics. First of all, we only sold the weed to the people that wanted it. We didn't have to advertise it as, "Hey, you got to

smoke this and then you'll be popular." The black market, they still grow the best!

Now legally the only thing missing is the distribution. Once they make it legal federally, then we're going to open the floodgates.

Because then all these stupid laws that they got in there now will hopefully disappear. It's too much competition right now. Like Colorado when they legalized it, "Oh, you can only grow weed in Colorado and the plant has to be registered," and blah, blah, blah, and on and on. So the black market is flourishing like they ever did. The cartels in Mexico, they're still shipping boatloads of grass up here, even though it's legal, because it's not accessible. So what's going to have to happen



is that they just have to make it legal federally, that's all. Then they've got to take the bounty off of it. Because what America did was put a bounty on it. They pay countries around the world. I don't know how

many, but they pay them millions of dollars to eradicate their marijuana crops. I know for a fact that there's a country in the Micronesian Islands called Palau and they're paid a million dollars a year to eradicate their marijuana crops. Now that comes in you know, that check is in the mail every year, a million dollars. So Palauans, because they have marijuana crops, thanks to The Peace



Corps who came in the 60s and they taught the Palauans about marijuana. Before the Peace Corps arrived the Palauans would chew that betel nut that made their lips all red and ugly. It would give you a coke cocaine high, you know, it gave you a speed high. Well, they eliminated that nasty habit with pot, so all the inhabitants on Palau became potheads. So what the Palauans do is grow two crops, one crop to destroy for the Americans, because

they're very honest people, and then one crop to smoke. So once these laws stop... like Nepal, they had the best hash in the world that the King used to put his stamp on. And then they stopped that with their stupid drug laws, the anti-pot laws, which happened during the Vietnam War by the way. It was pot that fuelled both sides of the Vietnam War, and it was pot that ultimately had the war stopped, because it was the potheads that were coming home and saying, "This is wrong."

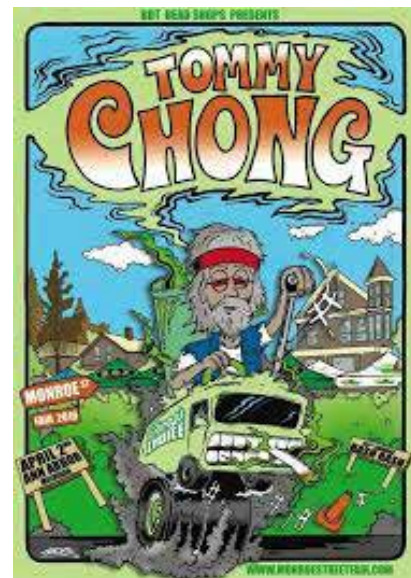
So once they legalize it federally, and allow us to bank our money, because right now, we can't bank our money. So we're still semi-legal when you can't bank your money, you can't get loans, you can't expand, you have to do everything with cash. By the way, we might start our own banking system because the marijuana lobby

is that powerful and it is going to be that strong. We've taken over alcohol, and we've taken over cigarettes, it's crazy. We've practically eliminated

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the opioid market, because of the CBD and the THC availability in those legal states. That's what's gonna happen, instead of more regulations there are going to be less regulations, less bureaucrats. I've always said that I never agreed with recreational marijuana, everybody's like, "It's going to free everything," no, bullshit. I really like the fact that when they had medical marijuana, you had to have a doctor's permission to buy it. I love that, because it gives the doctors an income.



That's a steady income giving everybody a clean bill of health. Now, that's perfect. They're still far behind, they still got a sort of alcohol mentality, smokers mentality. How sick is it that the government would tax the shit out of something that gives their people cancer, it's been proven, but they encouraged the sale of it because it gives them more money. But to do what with the money? Fight more wars? Get more people killed? So what I'm saying, when you asked about what's going to happen, remember that THC effects the brain and it activates a brain, it gets you thinking and it activates a very spiritual side of the man, like I talked about the burning bush. So eventually, not right away, but eventually, we will vote those people out that are fossil fuel crazy and they'll be out of business.

AU: What's new and exciting in your world?

TC: We've got Cheech and Chong grow rooms and dispensaries happening. For 420, we'll be opening one in Palm Springs, we're taking over an existing one. And it looks like we're



going to take over other few existing ones, and then we're going to open up a lot of our own, just from scratch. But this pandemic has shown us what is essential. I've got a friend, he once owned five bars and now he's down to zero. But the marijuana business is booming, it's crazy and it's so good for you. When I talk to people that I work with and my workers,

they're all happy because they're doing what they love. It's healthy, they're helping people. People working in pot shops now they're like the doctors.

AU: What was your first introduction to the Hippie movement?

TC: Jimi Hendrix! When Jimi came out with *Are You Experienced*. I took one look at Jimi. I played with him in England, he played bass. When I was in England, we all went there from Motown

with little short haircuts and little popsicle suits and when we came back, we had our own individual look. The leather vest, the blue jeans, the long hair, big cowboy belts, the blue jean t-shirts or Hawaiian shirts. Oh yeah, it was Jimi Hendrix.

AU: What was the first time you smoked marijuana and what kind was it?

TC: I was 17 years old in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. A bass player named Raymond Mah brought a Lenny Bruce album, that was my first comedy album, and a marijuana cigarette, which I put in my pocket. Raymond had another one he lit it up and I smoked it up. It changed my life. It literally changed my life. I heard music for the first time, I was listening to a tune called "Lonely Woman" by Ornette Coleman. I don't know if it was the next day or the next week or whatever, but I quit school, I was trying

to get a grade 12 education, it was my second try but I was just stymied by algebra, it just never hit, I'm a writer and I've got imagination.

AU: Do you have anything planned for 420 this year?

TC: We're going to Palm Springs to open up our shop and to sign autographs. Cheech will be there too. That's going to be our first dispensary. Then in a few months, we'll be going to Richmond, California to open our grow rooms and a dispensary.

Then we're going to be in Vegas, we're opening a huge venue in Vegas. It might be the biggest in the world, we're working on it. In fact, we might even put a drive-in movie theatre inside one of our locations. I designed a drive-in movie theatre indoors where you reserve your car for a night of movies. It's gonna be wonderful.

AU: And you can hotbox the car?

TC: Yeah! We're also probably going to put together a Cheech and Chong Museum in Vegas. You ask me what kind of weed I smoked the first time. It was Mexican, it was sensimilla. It had a few stems and seeds but it was so powerful. I would take a toke, put it out, take a toke, put it out, and it lasted me a month.

AU: Last time we spoke, you mentioned you were going to write a horror movie. Is that still in the works?

TC: I started and then I realized I didn't want that karma. My daughter Precious wrote one and she wants me to be in. I read the script, and I did not like



that feeling of creepy crawly. But I did a movie called *Color Out of Space*. It was a story of a pandemic. I play this old guy, kind of an hermit prospector who lives in a shack. Anyways I did that movie and the writers were impressed with my acting. So they wrote a kind of serious, semi comedic movie for Cheech and Chong. I've read the script, I love the script and so now it's being shopped around

looking for a director, so I got that going. Then Paris, my son and I, are going to be doing our podcast again, so we're restarting that up. We'll take whatever comes our way.

But more than anything this pandemic has taught me the value of being able to be home. I loved the fact of being home and working from the house. Now you get on the phone or get in front of the camera. I don't even have to wear pants!

AU: Were there any Cheech and Chong scripts from back in the day that never got made?

TC: Oh, quite a few. Cheech really pissed me off when we broke up because we were working on a movie called *The Cisco Kid* and then Cheech pulled out. Then he did *The Cisco Kid* with Jimmy Smits and it bombed horribly. A Cheech and Chong *Cisco Kid* would have killed the box office.

But I think our time has passed. You know? I mean, we've been asked if we would mind if there was a young Cheech and Chong. We got a documentary coming



can't tell the difference, it's just a high. I can tell the difference between strong weed and weak weed. That's the only difference I can tell. But I gotta be honest with you, man. Those strain names came from the Cannabis Cup. They would have different strains enter the Cannabis Cup, but it was a guy that gave *High Times* the most money that won time after time. So when I found that out I kind of soured on that. I tell people my favorite strain is marijuana, weed, pot, and cannabis. That's my four favorite strains.

AU: What age is appropriate to introduce your child to marijuana?

TC: It's up to him, don't get in his life, let him discover it. Wait until they ask, then tell them.

AU: Where's Dave these days?

TC: Dave is slowly dying of cancer in British Columbia. He's had it pretty bad for a while but he's hanging on.

AU: Oh, there is a real Dave?

TC: Yeah, yeah. Dave Graham is his name. He was my first partner before Cheech. In fact, when Cheech joined the group, Dave and I were the principals and Cheech was like the third guy. When the group broke up, Dave stayed because he had

kids and family. Cheech, on the other hand, was all by himself. Cheech and I stayed together. He was Richard at the time. He wasn't Cheech until we worked together one night and became a comedy duo. Coming home from the gig I said to Richard, "Don't you have a nickname?" and he said, "Yeah, it's Cheech."

As soon as he said Cheech I was outside the window, yelling "Cheech and Chong!" at the top of my lungs. It was ordained. I wanted to be on stage doing something, then I found out the power that I had with comedy, and Dave was the one that got me into it. So that's



where Dave is at right now. David Graham, and I wish him well.

AU: Any words of wisdom for people to enjoy a safe 420?

TC: Rejoice. Learn what we were taught during the pandemic, and carry it with you. My whole rap is just to enjoy life.

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THE WEED OLYMPICS



SASQUATCH BROTHERS



AMERICAN HAZE



PINK KUSH



VIOLATOR



GRAPEFRUIT



ORTEGA



CHARLOTTE'S WEB

CANNABIS STRAIN	Appearance	smell	taste	potency	Medical Qualities	score 1-10	COMMENTS
AMERICAN HAZE (HYBRID / SATIVA)	SHRUBBY AND CAKED WITH CRYSTAL	MORNING DEW WITH SMOOTH ZESTY AROMA	HERBIE WITH DANKNESS LIKE A RAIN FOREST.	JIMI EXPERIENCE NEEDED THIS IS ULTRA STONER STRENGTH	BETTER THAN ASPIRIN, OR A BAT TO THE HEAD GAVE ME SONIC CHRONIC BREATH	9	PRETTY WELL ROUNDED DANK, IMPRESSIVE . SO WHAT YER SAYING IS AMERICANS SURE KNOW HOW TO RECREATIONALLY PARTY!!
PINK KUSH (HYBRID / INDICA DOMINANT)	NUG BUD TIGHTER THAN A LUG NUT, MIGHT HAVE SEEN A CROWS FOOT? KEEFY GREEN	OBVIOUSLY IT'S YOUR POCKET REEKING CUZ ITS A PINK PUNCH NOGINN KNOCKER!	SPICY! MOST DANKST EVER FLAVA.	I COULD STILL PASS A WEED SOBRIETY TEST.	THE BEST TONIC IS PINK CHRONIC	8	BONG APPETITE IT'S A DUTCH ROW TREAT KILLER TRIPLE A WHERE'S MY ROACH CLIP?! THIS BAG IS DOPENESS!
VIOLATOR (HYBRID / INDICA)	CHUNKY NUGGLES AND CRYSTAL SHIMMERS IN THE LIGHT.	SNAKE VENOM TO THE NOSTRIL UNMISTAKABLE SMELL FILLS THE ROOM	OUTSTANDING HERBAL ESSENCE. EACH TOKE HAS A TANGY ZIP OF KUSHY POTPOURRI	SHOULD HAVE A DISCLAIMER, WILL NOT OPERATE AFTER USAGE.	THE PAIN IS GONE. INSANELY MUNCHING OUT. NON SMOKERS WOULD BE FURIOUS FROM THE DOPENESS. MIRACULOUSLY CRUNK CHEBA.	10	I'M HIGHER THAN NORMAL. THIS IS A QUADRIPLLEGIC QUAD A AAA. STINKS LIKE YOU HIT A SKUNK. STICKY KILLER WOULD BE DETECTED BY ANYONE WITHIN 5 METERS TYPE BOMBUDS.
GRAPEFRUIT (SATIVA)	AMAZINGLY ROCK HARD LIKE ME AT THE PEELERS. MEGA TERPS, STICKY AND BEAUTIFUL ORANGE HAIR!!	STINKS LIKE CITRUS HEAVEN	HOLY SHIT! I'M TASTING THE CITRUS EXPLOSION!	HEAVY AND A HEADBAND	IT CURED MY ELEPHANTIASIS	10	HARDCORE DANKNESS - SO HEAVY A PIZZA SHOWED UP I FORGOT WE ORDERED... 11 LOUDNESS. BURNT SMOOTH! LITE RESIN! SUCH A NICE AFTER TASTE.
ORTEGA (INDICA)	DENSELY DEVELOPED - VERY NICE HAIR CUT !	DELICIOUS FULL BODY ODOUR - MAKES YOUR NOSE DRIP FROM ONE SNIFF OF THE DANKNESS	ZAPS YOU WITH TREE SAP - NICE N SMOOTH CURE	FLYING HIGH IN THE SKY	FEEL GOOD MEDICINE	9	NOT CRAZY ABOUT THE RESIN LIPS - SMELLS LIKE MY HIGH SCHOOL LOCKER. GREAT HEADBAND!
CHARLOTTE'S WEB (OUTDOOR CBD STRAIN)	FLUFFY AIR BUD WITH STEM AND NO CRYSTAL	LIKE A HAYSTACK WITH A HINT OF FERTILIZER	HORRIBLE LIKE LIGHTING UP A HAY BAIL, MADE ME COUGH!	GARBAGE. GAVE ME ASS MOUTH	ITS FOR THE KIDS AND NOOB SMOKERS	2	YOU MIGHT AS WELL SMOKE THE WHOLE BAG IN ONE SESH TO TRY TO FIND A BUZZ THAT'S MISSING. DIDN'T GET HIGH BUT ITS NOT A PLACEBO EFFECT. I THINK... YUP, IT GOT ME SO UN-HIGH I SMOKED MY SELF STRAIT... THANKS CHARRO LATE!



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RANDOM GRAVES/ ROACHECUTIONER

CANNABIS STRAIN	Appearance	smell	taste	potency	Medical Qualities	score 1-10	COMMENTS
AMERICAN HAZE (HYBRID / SATIVA))	A GNARLEY INTERFERENCE GIVING MY MIND CLEARANCE.	LIKE DYNAMITE- MIXED ORANGE JUICE AND CHARTREUSE.	LIKE A TEQUILA GRENADE IN A PIE	WAS GREAT BUT I WAS ABLE TO WALK AWAY	GAVE ME A FIERCE CASE OF THE MUNCHIES	7	NOT THE BEST, BUT IT PUT MY ZEN TO THE TEST
PINK KUSH (HYBRID / INDICA DOMINANT)	PERFECT POPCORN FOR A T.H.SCENE	LIKE I MADE A GRAPE AND A HONEYDEW MATE.	LIKE A BLUE RASPBERRY EDIBLE BIKINI	STRAIGHT-UP FLOATIN, SEE?	TIME IS STALLIN, SEE?	10	MADE ME THINK ABOUT THE OLDSKOOL DAYS, MADE MY EYES GLAZE
VIOLATOR (HYBRID / INDICA)	LIKE SALTWATER TAFFY, A DELICACY EYE CANDY	WATERMELON MACE HITS ME IN THE FACE	LIKE APPLESAUCE AND A SWEDISH MASSAGE	SO HIGH I'M LOOKING DOWN TO SEE THE SKY	NO MORE HEADACHE, NO MORE SHAKES	10	EXTREME STICKY-ICKY BUDS THAT WARMED THE BLOOD
GRAPEFRUIT (SATIVA)	CHUNKY NUGS OF ORANGE AND YELLOW FUDGE	LIKE A CITRUS POTION EXPLOSION	LIKE FRUIT SALAD TOSSED BY A NURSE WEARIN' DENTAL FLOSS	MAKES MY MIND FEEL LIKE I'M LOST IN TIME	MY LEG GREW BACK	10	DENSE AND STICKY LIKE A TENNESSEE WHISKEY
ORTEGA (INDICA)	DENSE AND INTENSE	LIKE MAPLE SYRUP ON BOURBON CURRENTS	LIKE JELLY BEANS ON A MARDI GRAS QUEEN	STRONG ENOUGH TO FLATTEN A YAK	FIXED MY TWISTED BACK	9.5	BURNS A TREAT, WOKE UP FACE-DOWN ON THE CONCRETE
CHARLOTTE'S WEB (OUTDOOR CBD STRAIN)	HORRIBLE STEMMY STASH, LOOKS LIKE A HAG'S BRIAR PATCH.	SMELLS LIKE DEAD BIRDS AND BURNING TURDS.	LIKE MAGGOT CHEESE AND THE CHEESE DISEASE.	WHOLE 8TH DIDN'T DO SQUAT, HORRIBLE USELESS POT.	CAUSED DRYROT, TOO MUCH SNOT	0	WORST WEED EVER, WILL SMOKE IT AGAIN NEVER



CANNABIS STRAIN	Appearance	smell	taste	potency	Medical Qualities	score 1-10	COMMENTS
AMERICAN HAZE (HYBRID / SATIVA))	WHITE CHUNKERS, HEAVY WEIGHT PLUNKERS	SMELLS LIKE A MOLDY BOOT, BUT IN A GOOD WAY	SO SMOOTH NICE GROOVE	FULLY AWAKE AND BAKED DREAMS GOT CONFISCATED, BRAIN AGITATED	GUMMY AND YUMMY BUZZED LIKE A RUMMY RUBBIE, SATIVA CHUBBY	8.5	MUNCHIES FROM HELL DESPITE THE SMELL FROM HELL
PINK KUSH (HYBRID / INDICA DOMINANT)	LIKE PINK KUSH, NICE BUSH	MY NOSE GROWS LIKE PINOCCHIO FOR THE PINK ROSE	NOT GREAT BUT I KNOW THE STRAIN SO I SMOKE AND TOKE TIL I FLOAT	A SNEAKY PESKY CREEPER, A SLOW INTENSE BRAIN EATER	A STONED STONER IS A GOOD GOOD	7	THERE'S BETTER STRAINS AND BETTER CURES BUT WHO DOESN'T LOVE THE PINK
VIOLATOR (HYBRID / INDICA)	LOVELY, NOTHIN SAYS LOVE BETTER THAN BEING VIOLATED	1000 SKUNKS FUKIN ON MY LAWN	WEED FROM SPACE FULL FLAVOR IN YOUR FACE	NICE CALM CHILLIN OUT ON MY STINKY SKUNKY LAWN	A JOY TO ENJOY, ANYTHING THAT MAKES ME THIS HAPPY MUST BE GREAT FOR MY HEART	9.5	ONE OF THE BEST FLAVORS TO DEVOUR AND SAVOUR
GRAPEFRUIT (SATIVA)	GREEN FUDGE, DONKEY DONG BUDS, NUGS LIKE SPUDS	AMAZINGLY TREMENDOUS, FABULOUS IN FACT	SMOOTH, A TASTE YOUR GRANDMA CANT REFUSE OR ABUSE	STRONG , LOST IN A THINK TANK FROM RESINY SKANK	GOT WEED / THEN YOU AIN'T GOT NEED	9	STICKY AND STINKY LIKE A STREET BUM IN THE SUN, RANK AND DANK
ORTEGA (INDICA)	OLD SCHOOL RED HAIR SKUNK	CURED TO PERFECTION, MAKES ME SNOUT DANCE	LIKE AN OLD DRIED UP MUSHROOM LEFT IN THE BACK ROOM	HARD TO TELL CONSIDERING I HATE THE TASTE, ONE MORE TOKE NO NEED TO WASTE	PARALYZED FRIED AND PARANOID, HIDING IN DISGUISE	6.5	A THICK STONE, OLD HOMEGROWN, CURED RIGHT NOT DRIED TO BONE, RED HAIR MAKES IT LOOK LIKE OLD OUTDOOR
CHARLOTTE'S WEB (OUTDOOR CBD STRAIN)	TWIGS AND STUMPY STICKS, A FEW SEEDS AND LIMPY SKIMPY WIMPY NUGS	KIND OF LIKE A DEAD LAWN WITH NO SKUNKS FOR MILES	LIKE OLD LADY SMOKER BREATH MIXED WITH MOLDY HAY	VERY WEAK, POSSIBLY ZERO POTENCY- LIKE A ZERO ALCOHOL BEER	SMOKE SO MUCH OF THIS TRYING TO GET A BUZZ YOU WILL GIVE YOURSELF LUNG AILMENTS FOR SURE	1.5	SOMETIMES, BUT VERY RARELY, THE WEED IS WORSE THAN HAVING NO WEED



Ink.D / Mr.Black



GOLD MEDAL: VIOLATOR
SILVER: GRAPEFRUIT
BRONZE: TIE: PINK KUSH / ORTEGA
PARTICIPATION RIBBON: AMERICAN HAZE

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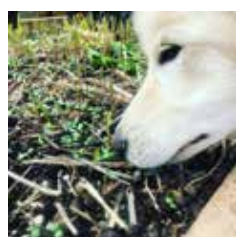


Plant Tonix Living Organics for Life

Interview by Iree-I

Absolute Underground: What was the genesis of starting your company Plant Tonix?

Well I was sick of growing in what I call the 'Betty Crocker Way' of growing, with chemical fertilizers and chemical poisons. This is when I decided to create Plant Tonix, a way of growing that improves soil, reuses soil, building



nutrient dense and sustainable growing mediums.

AU: How many years experience do you have?

I have 25 years experience.

AU: What products do you currently offer? Any new products planned for the future?

Activated EM and Bokashi are the current products and yes we are



producing couple of new products. We will soon have a Plant Tonix Grow input and a Plant Tonix Bloom input fertilizer. All of our products are 100% organic!

AU: Where can people find/buy the Plant Tonix line?

We can be found online at www.planttonix.com - We can also be found at retail locations such as Buckersfields (Victoria, Duncan, Nanaimo), Mr. Fertilizer (Victoria), Dinter Nursery (Duncan), Progressive Growth (Victoria) and other garden/ hydroponic stores.

AU: What is the best way to grow in your opinion?

There are many ways to grow. The Plant Tonix way is my favourite. Some reasons why I enjoy growing this way is because the focus is all on the health of the soil. The soil is the stomach for the plant and you are what you eat!

AU: What is the mission statement of Plant Tonix?

Effective Microorganisms for indoor and outdoor gardening and growing. Living Organics For Life!

AU: Please explain what activated EM and Bokashi is.

Activated EM and Bokashi are probiotics for your soil. Both Bokashi and Activated EM are a collective of effective microorganisms 'probiotics'. Activated EM is the liquid ready to use form and Bokashi is the dry form, that when wet, will activate.

AU: What other uses can your products be used for?

Funny you should ask because this product has endless uses from gardening to composting, and cleaning. If people are interested, they should simply google Bokashi or Activated EM. It will blow your mind!!

AU: Why is an organic approach to growing so important?

I truly believe you are what you eat. And if the soil is the stomach for the plant then obviously what you feed your plant is equally as important as what you are putting into your own body. When growing organically you can optimize the health and nutrition of your soil through the diversity of microorganisms. This then passes on the nutrients to you without toxic chemicals and other harmful plant foods. I believe this is a much healthier approach than the current growing situation we are in. The results are tip top yields with outstanding terpenes and vibrant colours. End result... True Medicine... True Food... True Abundance!

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CSU Pressures to evict VCBC despite provincial support and no jurisdiction

By Julia Veintrop

Thanks to pressure from the province, the Victoria Cannabis Buyers Club, a.k.a. the VCBC, received an eviction notice. The Provincial Community Safety Unit threatened legal action against their landlord, trying to force this industry founding, non-profit compassion club to leave its address of over two decades. For the medical cannabis community, this news is grim but the fight isn't over yet. Here are all the details on VCBC's threat of eviction, including what they plan to do about it and how you can help.

Important Background Information

The VCBC has been providing access to safe, high-quality medical cannabis and fighting for the rights of medical cannabis patients since 1996. The government has tried and failed to shut them down on multiple occasions and this is for a couple of key reasons:

They are a strictly medical compassion club and have never sold recreational cannabis. No one can become a member without documented proof of their illness.

Before becoming a registered non-profit in 2012, The VCBC has always operated as a very low-cost compassion club and never focused on profit. No one is making money; it has always been about helping sick people.

They supply products that are not available anywhere on the legal market and this makes them a critical access point for medicinal cannabis users. For example, cannabis suppositories are a life-saving product for people with acute

conditions such as cancer but they are not available within the medical, recreational, or grey market.

As it is currently written, the VCBC could never comply with the Cannabis Act. Doing so would make it impossible for the organization to continue to provide the products and services that its membership depends on. They

only supply medicine to incurably sick patients and in many cases, are the option available.

An exemption to The Cannabis Act

Refusing to comply with the current cannabis regulations means enforcement actions and the VCBC is no stranger to that. With the support of Victoria's Mayor and Council, along with Solicitor General Mike Farnworth, The VCBC is currently applying for a Federal exemption to the Cannabis Act.

Why did this happen?

They pay their rent on time, have a great relationship with their landlord and neighbors, plus, they provide a critically essential service. On top of that, we are in the middle of a global pandemic and the VCBC provides medicine. So why is this happening? According to the Ministry of Health, the CSU, "operates the province's regulatory compliance and enforcement program at 'arm's length' and runs a complaint-driven program province-wide." Basically, the answer is

that the VCBC is caught up in the federal bureaucratic process and in the meantime, the unit is just 'doing its job'.

The VCBC's Response

The VCBC has a solid legal team and with their help are making a point; the Provincial CSU has no jurisdiction over medical cannabis. The Federal

Government is in charge of medical cannabis, not the province. Trying to evict a twenty-five-year-old, medical non-profit organization is not only unjust, it's not unlawful. Hopefully, the province will agree with their position and back off.

Additional Strategies

Ted Smith, the Founder and President of the VCBC Board of Directors is a veteran of the War on Drugs. This battle needs to be fought on multiple fronts and no one knows that better than Ted. So, they came up with some other plans to help save the club.

Some of their additional strategies are:

Pressure the BC Cabinet to grant the VCBC a temporary exemption to halt the eviction, pending a decision by Health Canada on an exemption from that level of government.

File a court injunction with their legal team at JFK Law Corporation to suspend the threat against the landlord, and any other punitive measures by the Community Safety Unit, pending a decision by Health Canada on an exemption.

Daily protests at noon during the week, following COVID protocols, at the Ministry of Health to pressure Adrian Dix, the BC Minister of Health, to acknowledge the benefits of cannabis as a substitute for opiates and to advocate for the VCBC to get an exemption from his Cabinet colleagues.

Last Resort

Although this fight isn't over yet, the possibility that the VCBC will be evicted is very real. If that happens, how will this non-profit organization provide and care for the medical patients that depend on them? If worse comes to worst, the last resort is to put up a tent at City Hall. If the Province manages to shut down the

CANNABIS CORNER



The VCBC

The Original FARM

VCBC, that might become reality.

How you can help

This situation is about so much more than just one organization, it's about the rights of medical patients in Canada and our government's refusal to prioritize them. Please support the VCBC in their efforts to stay open by writing to your Provincial and Federal MPs. Your voice is louder and more powerful than you know; if you or someone you know is using medical

cannabis, please speak out on their behalf.

vcbc.ca



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Turn Key Micro

Interview by Iree-I

From Turn Key Micro:

Turn Key Micro builds and licenses the most cost-effective cannabis factories in Canada. Turn-Key Micro makes it simple. Our Micro Cultivation Packages allows for cannabis cultivation on all ALR properties in BC. Our clients avoid the common municipal pitfalls of cannabis projects. Turn-Key Micro enables cultivators to stay profitable and enter the market fast.

Cam lives on Vancouver Island, Canada. Cam has spent nearly 20 years cultivating in both the recreational and medical cannabis markets. From conceptualization to operations and operational management. With his years of hands-on experience in the field, he has a wealth of knowledge to share.

Cam works around Vancouver Island and beyond as a consultant to companies entering the industry. Cam previously owned and operated Canadian Medicinal Marijuana, helping with MMAR licensing and growing and has won multiple cannabis cultivation awards.

George is from Victoria BC, on the West Coast of Canada. For the past decade, his attention has



been set in the regulated cannabis industry: contracting with Commercial, ACMPR and MMAR License holders. His success in the industry can be attributed to a skillset in botanical extractions and an enterprising spirit, leading him to study business at the University of Victoria, for which he was awarded a Bachelor of Commerce Degree in 2016.

Absolute Underground: What brought you to the Cannabis industry originally?

George: Hey Ira, firstly wanted to thank you for inviting us to be a part of the 420 issue of *Absolute Underground*. Been a long-time reader of the magazine and honored to have Turn Key Micro Featured.

Growing up on Vancouver Island was a key factor for sure. Though only recently legalized in 2018, the culture here on the island allowed many growers to operate openly as a legitimate business for decades. The industry has provided for many families, the plants and the people are familiar. I suppose it's a point of pride that we know how to do it so well, after all these years.

AU: What was the genesis of Turn Key Micro?

G: Turn Key Micro exists to help our friends navigate the transition from Grey to White markets. Cam and I started off working together to build and license a facility in Tofino. During that time, so many companies reached out asking for advice on construction and licensing that it became clear that

there was a need. We've walked the path and our goal to show others how we did it: so you can find your own success in the legal cannabis industry.

AU: What services does Turn Key Micro provide?

G: Licensing Services, Facility Construction, Operations Support

AU: Who is Turn Key Micro intended to help?

G: Companies that are interested in transitioning from Grey to White. First Nations interested in bolstering economic development in their community. Medical patients looking for help or advice producing their own medicine.

AU: What are your thoughts on the current state of Legalization in Canada? Anything that can still be improved upon in your opinion?

G: Though it's an imperfect system, I think we should be proud of the progress we've made as a nation. We are the first country to federally legalize. That said, there are glaring and urgent issues yet to be resolved. Medical patients are still finding themselves on the legal battle-grounds for access to their medicine (respect to Ted Smith and the VCBC for tackling this head-on).

Further, some of the most talented growers are still held back by over-regulation. Turn Key Micro exists to help the independent operators, particularly where it comes to navigating and simplifying the hurdles of federal regulations.

AU: Any plans for 420 this year?

G: It's now legal for Canadian adults to gift each other up to 30 grams of cannabis at a time. Definitely planning on exercising this freedom, the world could really use more weed.

AU: Any favourite strains you enjoy?

G: Oh man. As a consumer I love all the vintage varieties: pre-98 Bubba, Islands Pink, Skunk, Thai Stick, Blueberry(s). As a cultivator however, we're always after something new and different. Some of our favorites were bred recently and don't



even have names yet. However, the top of our list at the moment is a toss up between StrawberryBreath and PeyoteCookies.

AU: Anything else you want to promote?

G: Organic Agriculture and Urban Farming! There's a huge disconnect of knowledge between the general public and the farms that feed us. Because schools generally don't teach farming methodologies it's important that we educate ourselves. Two books that got me going were *Hydroponic Food Production* by Howard M. Resh and *Teaming with Nutrients* by Jeff Lowenfels, both those titles are quite comprehensive. For some one just looking to get their first tent lit up another great starting point is *Marijuana Horticulture* by Jorge Cervantes.

AU: Final words of wisdom to share with our readers.

G: All things considered, you should consider all things.

AU: How do people find

you online?

G: Google "Turn Key Micro" and you'll find us :) Instagram @TurnKey.micro Website www.TurnKeyMicro.com Happy 420!





Wollammo!

Interview by Ira Hunter

Absolute Underground: What is Wollammo!?

Wollammo! is our tradename for a great rare mineral called wollastonite. Only found in a few places worldwide, our mine in St. Onge, Quebec has the purest source. Its benefits in agriculture and soil rejuvenation has been studied and shown to improve harvests for many different plants.

AU: What are its benefits when growing?

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AU: What is Wollammo!'s mission statement as a company?

To save the Hawaiian pineapples and to Wollammo! the world 1 kilogram at a time! We believe Wollammo! will contribute to a healthier and a more sustainable agricultural future, not

just for us but for all.

AU: Is Wollammo! organic?

Yes, 100%. Wollastonite is a mineral that comes from the earth and does not require any chemical processing to be an effective nutrient to aid and assist in the growth of a healthy garden.

AU: Any plans for virtual 420 this year?

Not really. Is this a thing now? I don't really like Zoom. I'll zoom on mushrooms but not through a screen as a way of communication. When the world gets back on track, you know we will be there.

AU: What makes an expert

grower?

It's all about paying attention to detail and being in tune with your plants. Not cutting any corners. Keeping your ego in check. Trying not to overflow the reservoir. Not being a douchebag!

AU: Best weed you can remember smoking?

In 1987 I was introduced to that lime green Road Kill Skunk that was going around at the time and spent at least an hour incapacitated and giggling on the sidewalk because of it. That was something! We've tried to bring it back and it is dank and all, but no one including us has seemingly succeeded in reaching the glorious pinnacle of that 1980's Skunk Bud - or maybe we have and it was just because I was 11 years old at the time... BC God Bud is my favorite now!

AU: Any fun stories or memories from going to Amsterdam and winning the Cannabis Cup?

So many... We won a total of four Cannabis Cups in Amsterdam. 2004 was the balls-to-the-wall one when I had to actually carry the God Bud there myself and then we won first place! I had this trippy hippy girlfriend at the time who accompanied me there and we had a blast. Youth is so fleeting, I was 28 at the time, and then when I got back it was front page news and I was

signing autographs on St. Catherines Street in Montreal and on Commercial Drive in Vancouver. Things were a lot different back then! The Stanley Cup hadn't been won by a Canadian team since 1993 and apart from the Olympic Gold in 2002, Canada hadn't won much of anything in awhile. It was pretty cool to be responsible for that little moment of Canadian cannabis history.

When we won in 2007, it was fun to meet Tommy Chong again for the first time since I had bumped into him at the Subway nearest to the Planetarium on LSD after a Pink Floyd light show in 1991! This time I actually succeeded in hooking him up with some of our award winning The

Purps and he was happy for it.

In 2009, we got to meet Jack Herer which was something, a champion pioneer and the famed author of *The Emperor Wears No Clothes*.

Unfortunately he was kind of on his last legs at this point and was laid to rest not even five months later.

In 2014, we won with a Night Nurse and then bounced to Athens, Greece to celebrate after.



We've got all kinds of amazing memories from being at these cups. Going from Cloud 9 one year with an epic win to Cloud Zero the next year with a subsequent loss, we learned to roll with the punches too!

Seeing Patty Smyth play at the Melkweg that time was pretty cool also, she killed it.

AU: Is it true Wollammo! is on the stock exchange now? How can people invest?

The Wollammo mine in Quebec where we get all of our pure wollastonite from is on the TSX venture exchange with the ticker VERT.V - ironic perhaps as it will go vertical soon!

AU: Do you skateboard better or worse when stoned?

I'm always actually trying to find that happy medium... It's usually somewhere in the middle!

www.wollammo.com



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Titty Titty Bong Bong

Puff! Puff! Pass Edition

This will be the second year the 420 themed burlesque show, Titty Titty Bong Bong, will not be on tour. The Vancouver Island original produced by the dope babes, Larrissa Champagne and April Ace, had halted production in Spring of 2020. Coincidentally, it would have been their fourth show in the year 2020 (notice the 4/20 anyone...?)

The smoke show of a duo had not



only planned to expand the tour to cover the Okanagan and Kootenay area, they also were adding topless meet-and-greets at local headshops along the way - what a thing to look forward to! With such short notice the first year, followed by performance restrictions, neither Larrissa nor April were prepared to produce an online show yet have been loving seeing how the community has pulled together in such tough times.

As everyone did, the ganja-gals stayed home, stayed safe and of course, stayed stoned. Stay tuned for the return of Titty Titty Bong Bong at a later date. In the meantime you can find highlights of past shows on IG @ TittyTittyBongBong #ttbb

Photo Credit: Brooky Jay



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King Bong

Interview by Roger the Shrubber

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking with and what are you most infamous for?

T: Hey, I'm Teo, infamous for many reasons but in the band I'm the drummer.

AU: Give us a brief history of the band, who are you and how did you form?

T: We're three friends from Milan who one day decided to play together and call ourselves King Bong 'cause we thought it was a fun name, then music happened and we couldn't let go of each other anymore. Me and Andrea had been playing together for some years already and when we met Alberto our common love for 70s records, stoner-doom and weird music just made us fit.

AU: Can you describe your sound for those readers who've never heard you?

T: We're an instrumental psychedelic trio with occasional guests; we try to incorporate everything we love in our music, from drone metal to jazz, funk, progressive and whatever we listen to. In the last years we dedicated ourselves to developing our own method of improvisation, which we called 'Beekse Bergen' and is constantly evolving.

AU: You've just released *Ogopogo*, a four-hour album! Tell us about it! What can we expect to hear?

T: *Ogopogo* is a chapter in the 'Beekse Bergen' saga, it's four hours of improvisations based on a map we've drawn. In this particular chapter we're joined by legendary guitarist Chris Haskett and the baritone sax powerhouse of Rosarita Crisafi. During the three days we spent with Chris we explored every inch of our musical imagination, going from groovy jazz-rock jams to some heavy bashing and smashing and a lot

of what's in between, including some moments of noise freakout and some electronics, too.

AU: What formats will it be available in? Would you ever press it on vinyl?



T: It's available as digital download and as a lovely four-CD set, hand-crafted by us during the pandemic lockdown. It's very unlikely that we'll ever print it on vinyl, it would cost us two arms, three legs and a pinky toe; moreover the recordings and mix

are completely digital anyway so it wouldn't make much sense.

AU: You've got some very exciting guest artists on the album, tell us about them! What was recording with them like, what did they bring to the table?

T: Well, it was freakin fun. Chris contacted us while he was living in the Netherlands, he loved our music and we started talking, discovering common interests as the Grateful Dead, saying one day... maybe... who knows. And then we made the day happen, or actually he did, as he jumped on a plane and came to Milan for three days, during which we played our asses off and had a lot of fun. He came to fit in our sound and never tried to force anything, it was a real pleasure both musical and human.

One of the days we were joined by Rosarita who's

been a friend for some years now, we always love playing with her as she's a phenomenal musician and always brings something different to the table, besides being a wonderful human being.

AU: Will you have them playing live with you whenever we can play live again?

T: We already played live with Rosarita more than once and we'd love to play with Chris again, problem is he's living in Australia right now which is literally on the other side of the world from us... But you never know, if there will ever be the slightest chance, we'll surely take it.

AU: This is our 420-themed issue, so what are your plans for celebrating 420?

T: Well, our best 420s have been spent at the Roadburn Festival in Tilburg (2017 watching Bongzilla was wild) but that won't happen in 2021 as it didn't happen in 2020. If we'll be free to go outside and play together we'll probably lock ourselves in the studio, get real stoned and then go with the flow. If we can't do that, it might be a good day for a Grateful Dead live or two. Or three.

AU: Do you use cannabis to enhance your creative output?

T: Our name speaks for itself, right? We most definitely do, observing the differences when we use hash instead or add some gin or bourbon to the cocktail. But that's not a rule, we really don't have many of those. Most of our guests don't smoke at all and we happened to play some gigs completely sober for one reason or another, we're still the same band, just with different ideas (and maybe a little tighter in our playing).

When it really works and it starts interacting with your playing, those are magical moments, you get to see shapes and colours in the music and if you're improvising you can really shape a world before your eyes.

AU: Do you have a favourite strain? Doobies or edibles?

T: Not really, it's not that easy to get any here in Italy so you don't get the privilege of choice.

Last time we went to Roadburn though we discovered the Ice-olator and watching Sleep play after smoking it is some memory that will never

leave us, as fuzzy as it might be. Pun intended.

AU: What's next for King Bong as a band? Will you be working on more music? Tours? Music videos?

T: We're already working on a lot of different stuff, some of it is already finished and just in wait. There's a suite coming with an extended lineup with a second guitar, Rosarita and a percussionist, it'll be a three-part monster and we can't wait to record it as soon as we can. We also made a radically different album called *Borda*, inspired by fog and fog-creatures; it's got a lot of synths and electronics and it really sounds like nothing else we've done. Then we're dusting off the four songs from *Sand=Return*, adding a second guitar to them and planning to do a streaming concert as soon as possible in which we'll play the complete album.

And we still have around 200 hours of 'Beekse Bergen' recordings to choose from, you know, just in case we ran out of stuff.

AU: What should we know about you that we don't already?

T: If you don't know it already it's for the best, trust me. You might not know that we love eating and cooking and we've had a lot pretty wild band dinners. But then again, we're Italian, that's hardly a surprise for anyone, right?

AU: Any final words for our readers?

T: Hoping to see you at a gig as soon as possible, stay safe, get stoned and listen to King Bong and the Grateful Dead! Find us and follow us on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and all the rest, we'll keep you posted on future projects, new music, videos and everything we hope to do in the coming months.

All glory to the hypnotoad!

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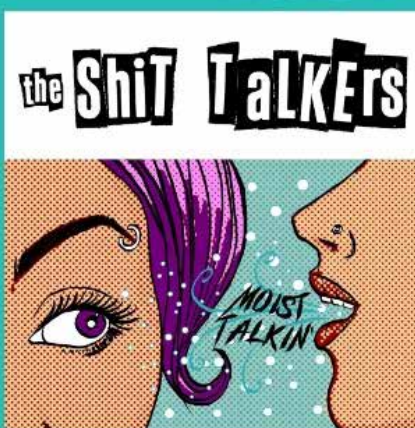
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was Casey Royer and this was definitely not Disneyland. Casey was the drummer on The Adolescents seminal *Blue Album* and on the “Welcome To Reality” EP (Casey can be seen on the cover dressed like a priest holding a bible that says D.I. on it). As a kid I went through the ropes and grabbed Black Flag and all the California punk rock like the Germs and The Adolescents

guys in his band still ride skateboards.

One thing is for sure, this guy is proud to be from California and proud to be from OC and he is still a punk rocker through and through, this is Casey Royer from D.I.

Absolute Underground: Hey Casey, this is Absolute Underground from up in Canada.

Casey Royer: I just took a nice little bong rip! So nice, the freedom of California. Where are you out of, Vancouver?

AU: Victoria, BC. It’s on Vancouver Island, you’ve got to catch a ferry.

CR: That’s so cool, what’s his name? Oh a boat ferry. Haha. I’m just a constant comedian.

AU: Who are we talking to officially?

CR: You’re talking to Casey Royer. I made up Social Distortion, then the Adolescents, then I got into D.I. with the movie, *Suburbia*.

AU: What’s the origin of D.I.? You started it because the Adolescents didn’t want to play “Richard Hung Himself” or something like that?

CR: Actually, the Adolescents were at each other’s throats. There was a little bit of crabbiness and just weirdness probably because Tony is a real kook. He told me and Rikk (Agnew) to get out and told everybody around the world that me and Rikk quit so he could cash in. It was just really strange. But the Radolescents are going now with me and Rikk and the guys that were in the actual Adolescents. After Steve Soto passed away, they’re standing there, “We’re the Adolescents,” and we’re looking at the flyer going like, “Who are these guys?” you know? It’s just kind of weird they got so far away from the family tree that we created... so that’s how the Adolescents broke up. That was when the scene was just going off in like 1982 or ‘83. Then in 1984 D.I. were in the film *Suburbia*. Then D.I. just kept playing and putting out albums every year. We started with *Team Goon*, *Ancient Artifacts* was one of them, then *Live In A Dive* ended up being one of our best recordings. The movie *Suburbia* kind of put us on the map, and we started touring Europe because Europe loves anarchy, and we were pretty much anti-government and stuff even though we were surfers from like Disneyland.

AU: What has D.I. been up to during the pandemic?

CR: We did a live video that’s pretty classic and we did the Backstage Bar & Billiards livestream in Vegas. Dude, it is the best thing that I’ve ever done. I’m not exaggerating. All the elements just came together. It was amazing, we played to like 20 countries and like 100,000 people. It was hilarious, I say the funniest stuff.

AU: How do people find it online?

CR: You just go to YouTube and search BBB Live Entertainment.

AU: What does D.I. stand for?

CR: Don’t Inquire. No, it originally stood for Drug Ideology based on the premise that our parents were square and if you did a chemical your brain would process information in a different manner and it made you more intelligent, so drugs were good. Isn’t that fucked up? So Drug Ideology then advanced to Developmental Intoxicants. Then it got thrown into this Disestablishment Ideologists. Then it became Do It, and then Dry Ice, Demonic Isotopes, Deionized Water. I remember one time in our studio in Anaheim we had a sharpie and we would write down D.I.s on a wall and eventually we had about 3000 different D.I.s written on the wall like scientists. I wanted it to be an index to nothingness so no one would really be able to put their finger on what it was. D.I. is just an objective name that you can make up on your own.

AU: What can you tell us about last year’s cover song project called *Flashback Favorites*?

CR: I think it’s really good personally, except I was a little monotone on a couple of songs like the Neil Young song. They wouldn’t let me get really

wild with it, you know. But on the whole it’s really good music to listen to because all the guys in D.I. are just on point and are at the top of their game. These guys are so precise and they’re sober and Trevor Lucca, our new guitar player, is just so freakin talented. He’s the missing link. My favorite song on there is Simple Minds - “Don’t You (Forget About Me).”

AU: What can you tell us about your latest release, *D.I.’s Greatest Hits A-Z*?

CR: I think it’s really good because with the current formation of D.I., the guys are nineteen years in now so the songs are in their blood and they can perform them so well. So now to re-record the songs with a little better technology than back in the day, I think it’s really cool. I really like it.

AU: What is one of your career highlights you can share with us?

CR: D.I. were on tour with the Misfits, it was the Fiend Fest Tour. It was us, The Damned, the Misfits, Agnostic Front, The Dickies, and Balzac from Japan. So we’re just all a bunch of lunatics on this tour. It’s like a circus. Dez Cadena from Black Flag is playing guitar for the Misfits at this time, Jerry Only is playing bass and singing, and Marky Ramone is playing drums on this tour. It was really kind of unique. So about two weeks into it, I’m side stage just watching the show and Jerry walks over and asks me if I wanted to sing a Ramones song with them just for fun. I’m all like, “Yes!”, so I get on stage, just charging with the song “Blitzkrieg Bop.” Then I get back for the last “Hey! Ho! Let’s Go!” and I’m kind of posed like Dee Dee

Ramone. I’m looking to my left, and there’s Dez smiling, then on my right is Jerry, and I look back, and there’s Marky Ramone. I’m all like, this is most triumphant that I got myself into this situation. That was pretty freakin’ cool.

AU: Do you still surf or skateboard?

CR: I surf every once in a while but the water is really cold right now and I’m kind of allergic to cold water.

AU: Do you have any plans for 420 this year?

CR: Just smoke a lot and have that glowing consciousness and that Jah energy.

AU: Do you have a favorite strain?

CR: I’m a heavy Indica guy with a little ball of wax on top of my bowl. It’s a great thing. It cures cancer and keeps people off alcohol, which is the disintegrator.

AU: Do you find you get more creative when you’re writing songs stoned?

CR: Oh yeah, absolutely. Music is a free form kind of thing and altered states have always enhanced creativity in art and expression.

AU: What did you think when Slayer covered a couple D.I. songs on *Undisputed Attitude*?

CR: That was so awesome. We couldn’t believe it. I’ll never forget Tom (Araya) on stage in front of 50,000 people in Russia and he’s like, “This is a song by a band from Orange County called D.I., it’s called “Richard Hung Himself!” and they went into the song in front of the festival crowd. I was just like, “That is just frickin’ Wow!” Really stoked, you know? Jeff Hanneman was a big D.I. fan and he would come to our gigs. Jeff was a punk rocker. God bless Slayer, if that makes any sense.

AU: Final words for Canadian punk fans?

CR: Canadian punk fans every morning when you wake up listen to SNFU, have a cup of coffee, and splash your face with water. Enjoy life and be safe and come to see D.I. play. Check out BBB Live Entertainment on YouTube, because you will not regret it. We also have another thing called Social Revolt for merchandise. And all of our stuff is available on Cleopatra Records out of LA. So thank you Oh, Canada. We even love the derogatory comments by South Park. Have a great day and enjoy the spring.

[cleorecs.com](#)

[facebook.com/d.i.bandofficial](#)

[facebook.com/radolescents](#)

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D.I. Caseyology

Interview with singer and founding member Casey Royer

By Ira “Pervert Nurse” Hunter and Dustin “Johnny’s Got a Problem” Jak

I saw a post last week on Facebook where someone asked, “Who is the craziest lead singer they ever saw?” and Steve Roberts (ex-guitarist for the Adolescents) said, “Casey Royer in 1983 looked like an escaped mental patient.” I was intrigued by that... When I was 14 I rented the movie *Suburbia* from Xanavision, it was your basic run of the mill movie about thugs and punks acting like dick heads but the scene where they went to the show and watched the bands blew my mind on the spot! I saw a punk band with their lead singer with dyed blonde hair and black eyeliner singing a song called “Richard Hung Himself.” I couldn’t even believe the name of the song. Just the thought of someone hanging himself just blew me away and a punk band singing about it? I couldn’t believe what I had seen... this was D.I. from California and the singer

but when I heard D.I. it was different. They had a system down and they had multiple records that were all good starting with *Team Goon*, then *Ancient Artifacts*, then *Horse Bites Dog Cries*, etc... With members like Rikk Agnew, John Bosco, and Alfie Agnew they were an unstoppable force in Orange County. The OC band went through many different lineup changes but it always centred around the same singer, the maniac frontman, Casey Royer. He had a crazy outlook on California and life in general, while always keeping a beach punk/surf style attitude. When bands started getting faster and more heavy metal or more just generic or pop sounding, D.I. stuck to their guns with the same sort of OC style sound, with a lead singer that had a serious tongue-in-cheek attitude and was almost a comedian at times.

Casey and Ira talked for an hour about snowboarding and Squaw Valley and all sorts of stuff like that. This guy still surfs and most of the





D.I. United We Slam

Orange County Punk Legends D.I. Breathe New Life Into Their Catalog Of Hits On New Album! Interview with guitarist Clinton Calton
By Ira Hunter and Dustin Jak

Following the release of last year's much talked about covers project, *Flashback Favorites*, the bad boys of Orange County punk rock, D.I., are back at it again with a collection of new versions of their biggest and best hits presented in alphabetical order (for quick reference)! *Greatest Hits A-Z* unites the best of both D.I. worlds, showcasing the power and passion of the band's phenomenal current line-up as well as the singular tunes that made D.I. one of the hottest punk groups of the '80s & '90s including "Richard Hung Himself," "Johnny's Got A Problem," "Perverv Nurse," "Hang Ten In East Berlin" and many more!

The collection also includes "Ameoba," which D.I. founder and still frontman Casey Royer wrote for his previous band, Adolescents.

The band is thrilled about the release of the project saying, "We're stoked to have re-recorded the D.I. classics with Casey and the current lineup of the band, and to work with Cleopatra Records on the release of these songs. Enjoy!"

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to today?

Clinton Calton: I'm Clinton and I play guitar for D.I.

AU: When did you officially join D.I. and how did that all come about?

CC: I got in D.I. in 2001 as a result of getting called down to do a recording. There was three songs that I did for Cleopatra Records on a compilation. It was a NOFX song, an AC/DC song and a Weezer song. I came down to record some guitar. Casey (Royer) was down there and he asked me if I wanted to do a couple shows, and I've been playing with them ever since.

AU: Describe D.I.'s sound if possible.

CC: OC Punk Rock.

AU: What's the secret to maintaining D.I.'s prolific Orange County, beach surf punk sound after all these years?

CC: Well, I think the secret for me as the guitar player, and maybe on a band level, is that we have the recipe that was initially formed by the original band and we haven't differed. If it ain't broke, why I fix it? We've kind of stayed with the general recipe of the sound that works and we understand and respect that.

Like I have no delusions that we're going to put out a reggae record next. I grew up playing D.I. songs because I liked them. Not necessarily because I thought I'd be in the band someday. Then when that opportunity came, I wanted to respect the sound that had been created. That was the reason I wanted to be in the band.

AU: What was last years cover project called called *Flashback Favorites* all about?

CC: We got approached by Cleopatra to do a cover record and we were happy to do it. So we compiled some songs that we were into, they

gave us some suggestions and we came up with a list and put it together.

AU: What were a couple of the songs?

CC: My personal favorite that I was able to input was "Girl U Want," by Devo. We did some Depeche Mode then we went back and did some Buffalo Springfield. So we're kind of all over the place.

AU: What is the latest D.I. release all about, *Greatest Hits A-Z*?

CC: We had recorded a version of the D.I. songs with our current lineup, which is comprised of me and of course Casey Royer, and Edward and Joe Tatar. Actually we recorded it before Trevor was in the band, we have a relatively new guitar player, Trevor Lucca. We just kind of wanted to get our versions out there and have some fun with it. It's out now on Cleopatra Records. They've been nothing but cool to us as far as releasing our records and giving us what we want with the artwork. It's been a great relationship with them thus far.

AU: When you re-recorded the songs were there any noticeable differences?

CC: Well, in my opinion, yeah. It's our version of some of the older recordings, for instance "Purgatory" hasn't ever been re-recorded. That would be up to the listener, I guess to decide what the differences are. Basically the arrangements are the same, but even if Led Zeppelin were to re-record "Stairway to Heaven." It would sound different 20 years later.

AU: One of my favorite D.I. songs is "Colors and Blood." Is that one that you guys still play live?

CC: I didn't write it, that was before my time. I believe Fred Taccone wrote it. Yeah, it's been in and out of the set. We did put it on the *Greatest Hits* record and I like the way it came out.

AU: I read that you've done some scoring for film soundtracks, which movies have you worked on?

CC: I had always been interested in producing soundtrack music and I got an opportunity to work on a couple of movies. I did one movie called *Rude Boy* by Gabe Zavala on Luna Max Films. I also did do a movie called *BorderCross* with Danny Trejo and Lorenzo Lamas in it. It's one of those things like being in a band. You work on it and if you can have success with it, then I may be able to take it further.

AU: What did you think when Slayer covered a couple D.I. songs on the *Undisputed Attitude* album?

CC: I wasn't in the band at that point, but yeah of course it was awesome to hear that. A big band like Slayer paying homage to all these punk bands. So yeah, that was great. Then as a result of me being in the band, I did get to meet Kerry (King) and Jeff Hanneman before he died. That was a big honor to have those guys be like, "Dude, D.I.!" you know? And I was like, "Dude, Slayer!"

AU: Did you grow up in California?

CC: I did. That's how I ended up meeting Casey, we all went to the same junior high school. We're all from Fullerton.

AU: Who were some of your influences to start playing guitar?

CC: In the beginning Ted Nugent and Jimmy Page, before the whole punk scene came to town. Early influences were D.I. and GBH as far as punk rock goes, but my taste was all over the place.

AU: How have you guys been staying busy during COVID?

CC: We did one online show at Backstage Bar & Billiards in Vegas.

AU: I'm looking forward to seeing you guys at Punk Rock Bowling again.

CC: We're on the bill. I think, you know, unofficially, so to speak. So, yeah, we're looking forward to getting back out and playing.

AU: D.I.'s singer Casey Royer was in Agent Orange, The Adolescents, Social Distortion, and the list goes on. Do you guys still keep in touch with all those people?

CC: We do on a certain level. When things were going before COVID, we would run into bands from playing at these big festivals in like Huntington Beach.

AU: What are some of D.I.'s most requested live songs in the set?

CC: "(I Hate) Surfin' In H.B." and for sure "Richard Hung Himself" and "Johnny's Got

A Problem." But we will get an occasional "Colors and Blood" shout out, or the random "On The Western Front," request.

AU: Can we expect any new material from D.I. in the near future?

CC: Yeah, you can. We're thinking about releasing an EP or record at some time in the future.

AU: Do you guys still surf or skateboard?

CC: Casey and Eddie and especially Trevor, our new guy, they're all surfers. I never was. I did skateboard, but it's not going to outweigh the pleasure versus pain ratio.

AU: Are you involved in any other groups as well?

CC: Yeah, actually I work for an organization called

PURE PUNK

Rock To Recovery. We work in the treatment industry, with people struggling from addiction and mental health. I go in and I do experiential music groups with them and also wounded warriors, veterans, and VA hospitals. We also have a band called Sacred Sons, in which we perform covers at our fundraising concert events.

AU: I'm sure you could really put together a super group of musicians that have been through recovery.

CC: Yeah, my boss used to play for Korn. His name is Wesley Geer and Sonny Mayo from the bands Snot and Ugly Kid Joe. We've also had guest appearances. Moby came down and played with us, Katey Sagal has performed at our concerts, the late Chester Bennington came down and played with Kings of Chaos. Monte Pittman from Madonna, Shavo (Odadjian) from System of a Down came and played with us.

AU: How does this program work?

CC: We do over 500 groups a month with 12 facilitators through Rock To Recovery, in treatment centres from here to Nashville. So what we do is we go in and give them some music and some hope.

AU: How did you first get the help you needed?

CC: Actually D.I. sent me to rehab, they gave me the opportunity to do that. So I've been sober since 2004. So I've got 16 and a half years of sobriety.

AU: Any final words for Canadian punk fans?

CC: We hope to get up there soon and we will be "Taking Care of Business", that would be a little Ode to Bachman Turner Overdrive.

cleorecs.com

rocktorecovery.org

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Rude City Riot

Interview by Chuck Andrews

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you best known for?

Dustin Lionhart: Hey! I'm Dusty from Rude City Riot. I sing.

AU: Please describe Rude City Riot's sound for the uninitiated.

DL: We are a ska punk band but with a powerful driving sound. Just enough grit, just enough brass.

AU: What has Rude City Riot been up to since *Nothin' But Time* came out 10 years ago? Other than the obvious of course that you have a

new album, *Shady Schemes & Molotov Dreams*, out on Stomp Records?

DL: My god has it really been 10 years?! It has flown by, to be honest. We have all just been doin' our own thing. Some of us had kids. Others kept playing in other projects.

AU: Was there anything different about the writing process for the new album from the last album?

DL: A few of the tracks we have had ready to go for years now. I write the majority of the songs. However, our new guitarist Luc co-wrote a few with me this time around and he brought some really cool ideas into it.

AU: Is the rest of the new album as political as the title track?

DL: The entire album isn't political but there are a few that touch on some serious and important

topics.

AU: Do you feel it important to write politically driven songs now more than ever?

DL: I think if you are lucky enough to have a platform to get important messages out you should do so. Racism is absolutely terrible. Once Ska hit the second wave and became two tone it was based on unity. After seeing what happened in the states with George Floyd and how much African Americans are hurting from and decades of systemic racism. People have had enough and so have I. So a song expressing this was inspired.

AU: What are your favourite tracks from *Shady Schemes & Molotov Dreams*?

DL: Hmm that's a tough one. I like them all. Some I'm proud of for the message. Others I like for the hook. I like "Kiss Me Bella" because it's not a ska song.

AU: Have you guys played anymore weddings since that super fun one in Victoria years ago?

DL: That was an epic night! We had a few offers but I couldn't get everyone together in time. So as of now that is the only wedding we have played.

AU: Any plans to tour Canada or elsewhere in the next couple of years?

DL: We are grateful that Stomp waited 10 years for us to get our shit together. Matt and Mike are awesome. We are ready roll (whenever that day comes), We will be touring.

AU: Is Vancouver still the home base for Rude City Riot?

DL: Yes.

AU: Who are your current favourite Canadian ska bands?

DL: The Planet Smashers! Not just saying this because the boss is also their lead singer/guitarist. The first ska show that Scotty and I ever played was way back in 1995 and it was opening for The Smashers. It was so far back that Dave Cooper was their drummer at that time. So now all these years later to be able to work with your heroes is pretty awesome. We have gotten to tour with them lots of times now. I'm also a big fan of Chris Murray who wrote "It's Raining" on our last record. I gotta shout out Los Furiros, Mad Bomber Society, K-Man and the 45's, and The Bone Daddies.

AU: Did Combination 13 do the artwork for the new album?

DL: Steve Kitchen is amazing! He did do the artwork for us again. As far as I know, our gas mask logo was one of the first he did when he moved to Vancouver. He's a busy guy now and I'm grateful he was able to lend his talent for us yet again. He's also a class act guy.

AU: Anything else you would like to promote?

DL: Our label. Stomp Records. Stream, download, listen, watch. So many amazing bands on one label. They are a Canadian institution that is vital to Canadian music. 25 years is an amazing accomplishment.

AU: Final words of wisdom?

DL: Wash your hands! Wear your mask! We are almost through this.

AU: How do we find you online?

DL: You can find us on all the major streaming platforms. This link takes you to the Stomp page which has every platform link in one convenient location.



stomprecords.com/shop/shady-schemes/



The Damn Truth

By AU Editorial

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking with and what are you most infamous for?

L: Hi, I'm Lee-la. Lead singer and rhythm guitarist of The Damn Truth and I'm infamous for saying the wrong things after drinking a bit too much.

AU: Give us a brief history of the band, who are you and how did you form?

L: Tom and I met while naked at a hippie festival. I was singing and playing a CSNY song around a bonfire. He heard, sat down, and we jammed for hours, and then years. Later, we found ourselves in Montreal and met our to-be-band mates while backing up a now-failed pop princess.

AU: Describe your music for those of us who haven't heard it?

L: Honest, loud, "in your face", gritty, distorted rock

n' roll.

AU: You're releasing your third album, *Now or Nowhere*, in May - tell us about it! What can we expect to hear on it?

L: Six of the nine songs were recorded at The Warehouse in Vancouver with the legendary Bob Rock. We were booked to finish the album with him in March 2020 when COVID hit and we had to finish the album ourselves in Montreal. We then enlisted the following heavy weights for the mix- Vance Powell (Jack White, The Raconteurs, The White Stripes), Nick DiDia (Pearl Jam, Dirty Honey) Mike Plotnikoff (Aerosmith- Get a Grip), Jean Massicotte (Lhasa De Sela, Patrick Watson, Bran Van 3000). The result, in my opinion is by far the best album we have made to date.

AU: Does the new album explore any particular themes or topics? How does it differ from your previous releases?

L: In our last two albums I think we did a lot of "finger pointing," calling out all the bad we've been doing as a society, to the planet, to each other. There was a lot of fear in me. Bringing a child into this mess-of-a-world terrified me and it came out in my songwriting and also in the way I was singing. Listening back I find that I sounded pretty angry back then. And I think to an extent I was.

After touring extensively in the four years after releasing *Devilish Folk*, we got to meet a lot of people on the road, and I really got the sense that

what unifies us all (other than our everlasting love for rock n roll) was the need to feel and be loved and a hope for what's to come.

So I find that we made a conscious effort to write hopeful and uplifting songs that focus on love as a unifying concept.

AU: Tell us about the recording process! Due to Covid-19, we understand that you ended

up with a few different big names involved in producing the record?

L: So...I already mentioned all the incredible humans that were involved, but a few anecdotes about our time in studio with Bob...

Everyone knows what an incredible producer he is... how skilled at his craft, how vast his knowledge of music and his incredible gear... but something we discovered while working with him was his amazing ability to tap into your psyche and bring out the very best in you. I think he pushed us to our limits and beyond and the result is just great.

AU: Tell us how you came to be featured on Hockey Night in Canada! Are you hockey fans?

L: We got an email from the music supervisor at Sportsnet/Hockey Night In Canada a few days after releasing the first single, simply saying that he just came across "This is who We are Now," on Spotify and loved it and was wondering if they could use it. Of course we jumped for joy and couldn't believe our good fortune. Especially our bass player PY, he is a devout HABS fan and has been all his life-it was a dream come true for all of us but for him in particular.

AU: What's next for you as a band? Are you hoping to tour? Shooting any music videos?

L: We just filmed our music video for the first single a few weeks ago. We have not seen it yet but filming it was one of the craziest things we've

ever done. Basically an 8x8 room was constructed on a huge revolving hinge that was attached to a motor, and we were basically jumping off the walls and ceiling spinning 365 degrees. It was insane and terrifying and so cool! Can't wait to share it!

AU: What do you miss most about playing live? Do you have a favourite city that you'll be hitting up first thing?

L: The four of us really thrive on stage. We live for our live shows so the last year has been quite devastating. We were fortunate to be invited by Osheaga to play the first drive-in show in Canada last summer, and we ended up playing two shows in one day. It was an incredible and unforgettable experience but we cannot wait to get back on the road. We'd love to tour anywhere and everywhere and then turn around and do it all over again! We've had some incredible nights in The USA, like headlining the Whisky A Go Go in LA, and we can't wait to get back to Europe, but I think we're all itching to tour the UK. On our last Euro tour we only had one night at our sold out show in London and there's been a really warm reception to our new single over there and it feels like we would have a ball.

AU: What do you hope audiences take away from your newest record?

L: After the year we've all had I think we all just need to feel hopeful and loved. If any of that comes through on the record then I'm happy.

AU: What formats will the new album be available in, and where can we get them?

L: As of May 7th you can listen to the album everywhere music is heard, but if you want to listen to it the way it was intended, I would highly recommend getting the vinyl. It's really pretty as well, violet splatter on a clear vinyl. You can preorder it at thedamntruth.com.

AU: What else should we know about you as a band that we don't already?



L: I'd say to check out our cover of "Love Is Blindness" that was featured on Yves Saint Laurent's "Mon Paris" perfume advert, as well as tune in to our weekly Web-episodes via our



Facebook or YouTube channel, where we discuss what's going on in our #weekinthedamnlife, share behind the scenes footage, and talk about what it's like to be a band in 2021.

AU: Any final words for our readers?

L: Thanks for chatting with me and can't wait to play live for you all very soon!

thedamntruth.com





Greenleaf

Interview by Roger the Shrubber

Absolute Underground:
Who are we talking with
and what are you most
infamous for?

AH: Arvid Hällagård, vocalist
and one thing people don't
know about me is that I'm a
real morning person. I love
being up really early when
everybody else is sleeping.
Listening to the silence.

**AU: Give us a brief history
of the band, who are you
and how did you form?**

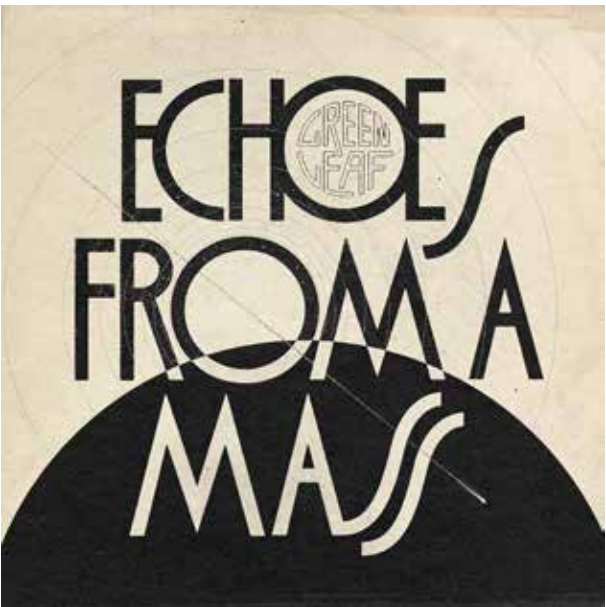
AH: Greenleaf formed 20 years ago and was from
the beginning a side project to Tommi's other

band Dozer. But since me (Arvid Hällagård) and
Sebastian Olsson (drums) joined the band back
in 2013, we have been a full blown touring act.
And released an album every second year, *Echoes*
From A Mass will be my fourth
album with the band and in my
opinion probably the best yet.

**AU: Can you describe your
sound for those readers
who've never heard you?**

AH: We play a sort of heavy
rock or stoner rock as some like
to call it. It has 70s influences
mixed up with more modern
heavier stuff. Though our music
isn't that heavy, we are more
focused on the melody and the
groove, rather than sounding
dangerous, haha.

**AU: You're releasing a new album, *Echoes From
a Mass* in just a few days... tell us about it! What**



**album during a pandemic?
Did lockdown change your
normal writing style?**

AH: No not much, a little bit
more of sending stuff back and
forth but not a huge change. We
still met up at rehearsal room
writing together and so on.

**AU: What's next for the band,
will you be doing more
recording? Touring? Shooting
any music videos?**

AH: Touring when we are able
to do it again. And before that
I guess we will start working
on another album. There's not
much else to do haha.

**AU: This is our 420 issue, so
how will you be celebrating
420 this year?**

AH: For me, with ice cream.
Preferably Ben & Jerrys
Halfbaked.

can we expect to hear?

AH: What can tell you... As I said, it is in my
opinion probably our best one so far. It's much
more melancholic and darker then the ones
before. Especially lyrically. I was going through
a tough time writing this album. And I think you
can hear in the songs. Other than that you expect
a bunch of really great riffs and outstanding
grooves.

**AU: Does the new album explore any particular
themes or topics?**

AH: Yes I was going through a very tough divorce
and most of the songs are about that. The
emotions I was carrying around at the time. For
me it was a very therapeutic album to write. Just
letting everything out on paper

**AU: What formats will it be available in and
where can we get them?**

AH: All formats and everywhere basically. Just
Google, haha.

AU: What was the process behind writing an

**AU: Do you have any favourite strains or
edibles?**

AH: No not really. But the Swedish form of
brownie is really good. It's called Kladdkaka in
Sweden. I can recommend it strongly!

**AU: Do you use cannabis to enhance the
creative process?**

AH: I can't say that I do, no. I smoke weed from
time to time. Mostly to relax. Shut down the brain
for a while. Music I like work for me, I don't wanna
combine work with weed.

**AU: What else should we know about you that
we don't already?**

AH: I row a lot, 5 km almost everyday. Helps me
think.

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SUZI MOON

Suzi Moon

Interview by Chuck Andrews

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to today and what are you most famous or infamous for?

Suzi Moon: Hiya, I'm Suzi Moon! I am not famous. But I am infamous for getting kicked out of my own show in Scotland after cutting my chest onstage with a broken beer bottle, blacking out, and covering the crowd in blood. We sold out of merch, the promoter apologized, and we were invited back to the club "anytime"! This was only after I told him they wouldn't have stopped the show if a man had done it. He agreed. And the rest is herstory...

AU: You previously played in several bands before you went solo? Civet, Turbulent Hearts, and L.A. Machina correct?

SM: This is correct. I have also contributed vocals to the song "Rock And More" by Informal Society, covered "The American In Me" by Avengers on a compilation with Dez Cadena & Bryan Migdol of OG Black Flag, co-wrote a song called "Bangin' On My Head" with Tony Standell of The Standells, I've directed and edited eight Turbulent Hearts music videos, one L.A. Machina video. I am also a photographer; I have shot album covers for Barb Wire Dolls, Livingmore, Yotam Ben Horin, The Two Tens, and Love Zombies. I love thrift stores & pizza.

AU: How did putting together your solo EP "Call the Shots" come about? Was it

material that didn't fit in other groups? Or did you set out to create solo songs?

SM: "Call The Shots" came together organically and unexpectedly! I had written these three songs in 2019 but didn't really have anything to do with them at the time. I was bored with Turbulent Hearts. When the opportunity to start L.A. Machina came about, I went all in! It was refreshing to do something new; playing bass & writing parts to someone else's songs. Although I was encouraged by the girls to contribute music to the band, I really didn't feel like my songwriting style matched Machina... My stuff is more classic punk/rock n' roll, not the stoner/garage style we were doing in Machina! But when the pandemic hit, and all of our summer 2020 plans were cancelled, I felt compelled to book studio time and record my songs. Rikki Styxx and I were spending so much time together at the rehearsal spot, and it naturally came about that she helped me build the foundation to these songs with her dynamic drum beats! We went into Paul Roessler's "Kitten Robot" studio in LA and quickly hammered out the basic tracks for the three songs that would later end up on "Call The Shots." It was a few months later 'till I could get back into the studio to finish it, and by then Machina had fallen apart & my life was moving in a new direction. I am very grateful to Ghost of Suzi Past for looking out for Ghost of Suzi Future, because this project was not at all what I was expecting to do this year, but it feels totally kismet and I am so ready for this new chapter.

AU: How would you describe your sound and also what can people expect from your live performance?

SM: My songs are sassy, gritty, heartfelt... Exaggerated reality... Writing thoughtful lyrics is very important to me, but I seriously try to keep things simple. I think WWJRD? Meaning "What Would Joey Ramone Do?" How can you convey a complex feeling in a lighthearted way? At my live shows, people can expect a fun time. A tight, rockin' four-piece punk rock n' roll band. I mean, I don't even know what you're going to get. You'll just have to come see for yourself!

AU: How did you come to be on Pirates Press Records?

SM: Well I have been a fan of Pirates for years! They have this amazing reputation in our community for being down to earth, hardworking, and really just the absolute WORD in great music. They've had their finger on the pulse for some time now and I have been continually impressed by the quality of the product they produce. I met Vique Martin through a mutual friend at a Bronx show in Long Beach a few years back. One day in late 2020 the stars aligned and we got to talking about these three songs I had recorded for an EP... And here we are! Vique is so cool & such a dedicated champion of the musicians she works with. She totally gets me, and it is really fuckin' awesome to be working alongside a badass woman on this project. Don't get me wrong, all of the Pirates team are super rad! What's even cooler is that they are allies who respect and encourage us. I'd be hard-pressed to find a more perfect label!

AU: What are some of your goals as a solo artist?

SM: My goal is to tour tour! Nothing satisfies me like a live show, and with all this time off I am ACHING to get back onstage and play the new songs with my band. I just wanna go everywhere I am wanted and feel the energy of happy people boppin' around to rock n' roll again. I will never stop making new music. I love creating art with other people, meeting fans, talking to other music lovers, making friends around the world. Who knows where this solo thing will take me!

AU: Where have you received the warmest welcome while touring in a band?

SM: This question made me smile, and brought back some awesome memories, thank you! I would have to say France. Summer 2010 Civet did a headlining tour through Europe and when we made it to France people just lost their shit. We had the biggest crowds I had ever played for as a headliner. Lines outside of the clubs were wrapped around the corner, crowds chanting our name, and people offering us more wine than we knew what to do with! I can't wait to go back.

AU: Will there be a full length record to follow your debut EP?

SM: Yes! It's already done. My full length album *Dumb & In Luv* is a ten-song record with that classic California punk sound I grew up on. It was produced by Davey Warsop from Sharp/Shock at his Strong Studios in my hometown of Long Beach, which was very special for me. I have wanted to make this album for years, but the timing was never right. Then came Covid Summer 2020 & I made recording a priority, without knowing when or how it would be released. I am so proud of this album, it's the record that I have been working towards all of my life... Finally these songs are out of my head! One of them is seven years old. It just never fit my other projects. Going solo has given me freedom and confidence. I'm not worried about it being "punk enough" - fuck that, I AM punk enough, you know? I don't have anything to prove to anyone anymore, I just gotta make myself proud & do what feels right to me. And even though it is going to be a while until the album is released, at least it is all finished. I

can move forward. I have 13 songs written for the next one already...

AU: Who are some of the bigger influences on your solo work?

SM: My influences have pretty much stayed the same since I first heard the Beach Boys on the radio when I was a kid. While I am incredibly inspired by these people, I never try to write in someone else's style. But I do carry their energies and influence in my heart, I think that is natural for an artist & it permeates our musical interpretations of the world. Tom Petty, Iggy Pop, David Bowie, Smokey Robinson, Otis Redding, Dead Boys, Lou Reed, Dion, Edith Piaf, Doris Day, Elvis Presely, The Cramps, Dee Dee Ramone, Etta James, Nina Hagen, Johnny Rotten. To me, these guys are just the greatest songwriters and performers of their genre.

AU: Any tips for surviving the Apocalypse to share?

SM: Don't cut your own hair, and keep a "beating stick" in the closet by the front door. You never know when you're gonna need it!

AU: Any plans for 420 this year?

SM: Haha, the last time I celebrated 420 was in 8th grade when my friends and I all pitched in for a "\$100 bag of weed"! We were soooo cool.

AU: What's something you've never told anyone before?

SM: ... I've never told anyone that written interviews kinda suck (you asked!). Why not just get it over with a 20 minute phone interview

PIRATES PRESS

that can later be transcribed? Why burden an artist who is probably their own manager, merch person, booking agent, and social media person by adding a written essay to an already busy schedule? It's like doing homework. Please call me next time! It would be much more natural to have a human connection and hear the voice of the interviewer.

AU: Anything else you would like to promote?

SM: I recently launched an interview show called "Rockin' Closets" that airs every Thursday at 7 pm PST on my Instagram! Musicians/creators get asked a lot of the same questions over and over again, so I had this idea to focus on personal style & the relationship between fashion and rock n' roll. There has been a lot of positive feedback so far from viewers and artists alike! It's a

fresh spin on the classic video interview format, and I get to introduce my followers to new people. Plus, it's fun for me to do the interviewing for once!

AU: How can people find you online?

SM: I am most active on Instagram @thesuzimoon but you can also follow me on www.Facebook.com/suzimoon or check out my music videos, announcements, & full episodes of Rockin' Closets at www.Youtube.com/suzimoonofficial or on my website www.suzimoon.com! I also have a merch shop www.suzimoon.bigcartel.com - People might not realize what a difference buying a \$2 sticker or patch can make! Please support underground artists any way you can. Bandcamp Friday is another good way to help! Thank you for the interview! Xoxo Suzi

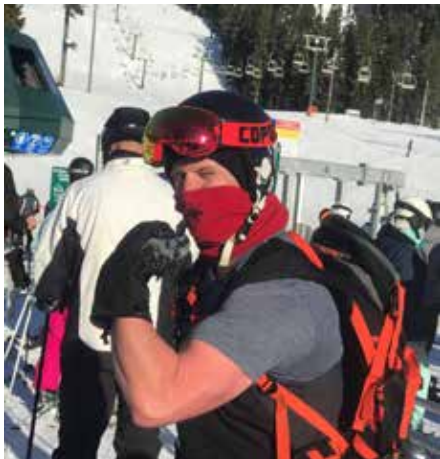
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Powder Seekers Vancouver Island

By Brydon Parker

Who, What, Where, Why, When... these are the questions that this story will answer.



Dave Best is a search and rescue operator. He is in charge of the waters off the Victoria waterfront. Super Dave is linked into the best weather apps and is the logical choice to lead the pack of powder hungry seekers. Dave also owns and operates a company called Vanillablossom Flavours Inc, which manufactures the world's best vanilla extract and several other products. Dave goes fast and if it is snowing, the 10 centimetre rule will be invoked. For those of you who don't know about this rule, you should adopt it into your soul. If it snows 10cms or more you are entitled to take the day off work to chase powder, unless you work for Dave, then you have to work.



Tonow Tokunaga is the backbone of the powder seekers. He is always down to ride or go on an adventure snowboarding, any time anywhere. He also adheres to the 10 centimetre rule and will drive through any weather to score pow runs. Getting up at horrible early hours to get the gang up the hill before anybody else. If we are not on the first 10 chairs up the hill Tonow considers that a fail. T also has a knack for snacks and can eat his body weight daily. He rides fast, hucks big airs, and throws down the ripping fat powder lines that are making the seekers a force to contend with on the hill.



Ira "Irocker" Hunter is the religious soul of the gang. We all worship the Norse God of snow and ice named Ullr. This God demands sacrifice before the omnipotent being will unleash the blizzards we all crave. The sacrifice must be made! It may be small or extravagant but we all huck roaches and yell ULLAR!!! Big roaches equals big flakes! This works because alpine conditions can change drastically. Irocker has been hovering at the top of the leaderboard. What is the leaderboard? This is an app that is sponsored by our local hill Mount Washington. You hook it up and it gives your statistics and compares them to all the other app users on the hill. It keeps track of distance, fastest speed, average speed, and vertical metres. People can compete for daily, weekly, monthly, or for the season's combined total. Bragging rights is what this is all about and Irocker loves to stuff his pockets with pizza and pound in the runs to pad his stats as he hunts to stay at the top of the seasonal leaderboard.



S.Cam the Third is one of our newest additions to the gang. He is a father of six and homeschools his kids. S.Cam has been using Mount Washington as his classroom for this season. Five girls and one boy, Hudson, who is a junior member of the pack who rips really fast and is super punky. S.Cam's girls rip too but Hudson is ruling his family pack. So S.Cam discovered a loophole in the leaderboard system, if you are activated, meaning the app is running, and you get in a car and manage to get to 105 kms between the parking lots and the Sunrise Quad you will be recorded as a high speed 105.1 to be exact. The funny thing is S.Cam later broke his own ill-gotten gains by actually going 105.7 on fresh corduroy groomers that during mid-season are solid ice, nothing faster than that. S.Cam is gonna be pissed I let that secret out of the bag. Ha Ha too bad.

Me, I am Brydon. I am not actually on the Powder Seekers group fuck Facebook chat thingy but I do ride with the pack and write about it. I have been riding injured since 1986 so I am not too good or very fast but I have fallen down quite a few mountains. The thing about the Powder Seekers is we all come from very diverse backgrounds that have solid common ground. We love to rip fast or slow at Mt. Washington, it doesn't matter because it is a small family hill and it is easy to meet up if you get lost. Due to the fact we also love to party, we all pitch in on a rented condo so we don't have to drive. Two weeks at a time hiding out during a global pandemic with my close friends partying and watching the powder pile up. Barely get any sleep, go out and ride as hard as you will let gravity take you. PARTY and repeat.



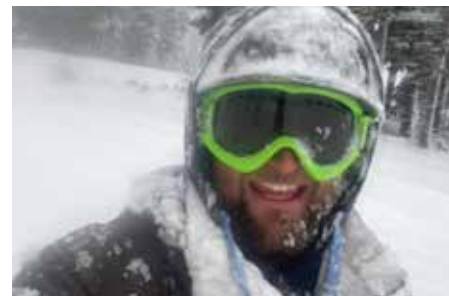
Robdog is the only two planker in the group and is also injured from many long seasons of bad decisions and slowed reactions due to an A535 addiction. Some folks get choked if you get into their stash, not Rob, but don't touch the Voltaren. Rob has been documenting our shenanigans with an assortment of cameras, from drones to steady cams, and he is fast on the follow cam with his Snow Blades (shortened skies). Rob is the only one who isn't into powder at the moment but once his knee heals up and he is back on a board he will be ripping fat pow lines and shooting for the sun. Rob is a leaderboard contender and great cook. The rented condo is always smelling like home cooked classics when Rob is ripping lines with The Seekers.

Garfield Trimborn is like Jason Bourne on a snowboard. A hard working construction guy who totally fucking kills it on the hill. Gar is the only one who can compete with me on the injury list. Braces for knees and shoulders are part of the daily gear checklist, as well as Voltaren, T3s, Beers, a thermos of Baileys and coffee, plenty of doobs

POWDER SEEKERS



and mushrooms round out the first aid medic kit to keep the fun level high and the pain level low. Gar is the one when we are standing at the top of the craziest cliff, bowl, or chute wondering about whether we should drop in and we will suddenly hear Gar scream and drop into his biggest powgasm ever. What a guy, no trip is complete without this good natured beast.



Brazier Mike is the latest member to reach the crucially injured list. But wait I digress, Brazier is Shawnigan Lake royalty when it comes to mother-hucking wakeboarders. A backflip master on the warm waters of the lake. Brazier easily transitioned from wake to slopes and is really fun to ride with on the hill. He's always willing to ride in any weather conditions and is always prepared to suck back a 15 pack on the lift. Mike loves the terrain park and spent a lot of his riding time hitting the fat jumps. This season Mike really went for a Powder Seekers mindset as he exploded on the leaderboard with strong showings in all categories. The only thing the leaderboard doesn't tell the online world is how inverted you get, or how high off the jump you sailed, or how much amplitude you rocked. Mike was ruling the world in the rented condo until one blue bird day when gravity and Mike had a disagreement and Mike lost, breaking his fibula leg bone and bringing his season, like this article, to grinding painful halt.

More powder seekers stories and intros to come in the next edition of Absolute Underground.

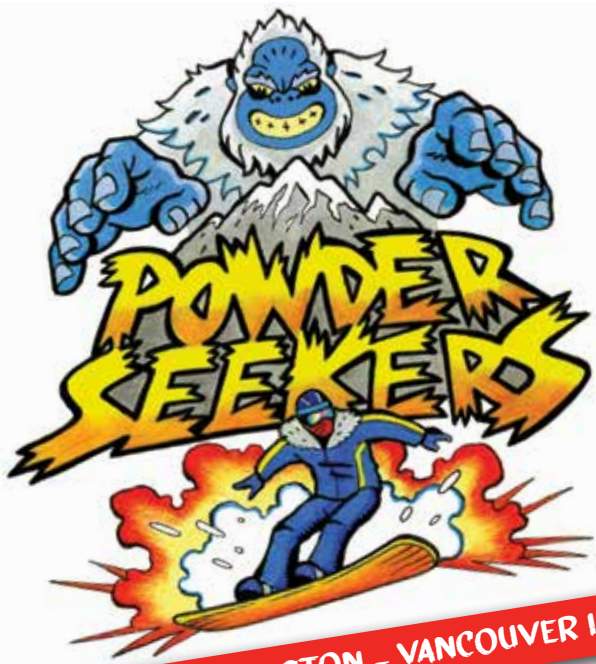


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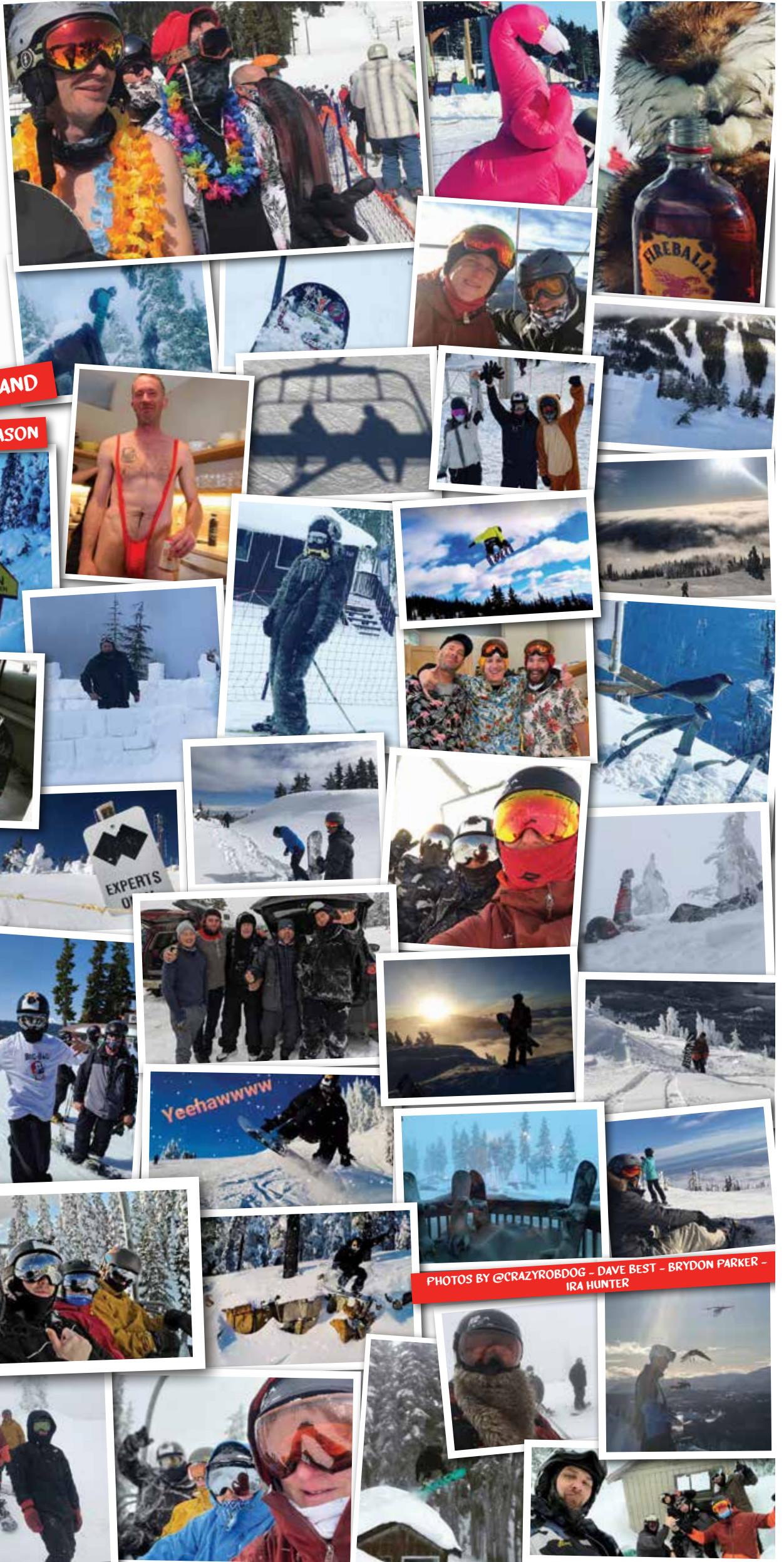


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MOUNT WASHINGTON - VANCOUVER ISLAND
2020/21 SEASON



PHOTOS BY @CRAZYROBDOG - DAVE BEST - BRYDON PARKER - IRA HUNTER

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CANADIAN PUNK ROCK

DISTORTED GARDEN



DIY ETHICS

"Distorted Garden's latest offering opens with the insanely catchy "Ruined My Life" and holds the upbeat spirit throughout the rest of the five-song EP. This is chicken soup for the heart, and it packs a happy punch. Despite the chilling chorus of "I can't even breathe" the second track "Covid-19" is also cheerful and upbeat. A poppy keyboard accompanies the buzzsaw guitars and gives the song a joyful, holiday-type feel. Indeed, isn't that what we need in these scary and uncertain times? There isn't a downbeat song in the bunch, and even "She Don't Want My Baby" is hook-laden and bouncy. GG Allin might not have approved but Living Large in the Time of the Plague is buoyant and bubbly without being sappy or saccharine. Slap this baby on the turntable and dance dance dance. Just what the doctor ordered to chase the blues away."

- Chris Walter

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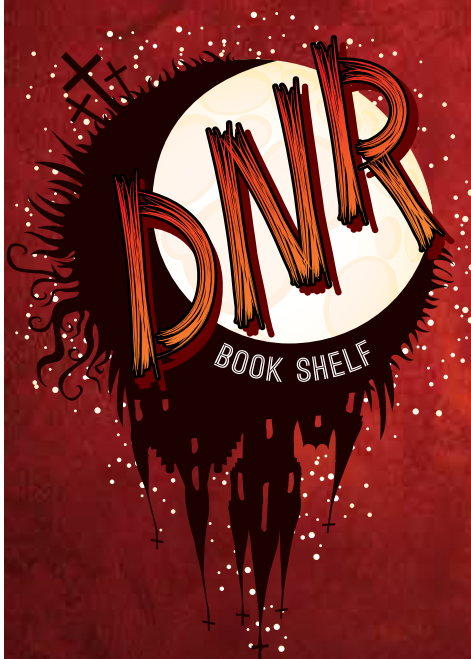
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WHEREVER WE'RE OPENED,
WE'RE RED.'

CLIVE BARKER. BOOKS OF BLOOD:
VOLUMES ONE TO THREE

THANK
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THE SLOB



Aron Beauregard
Independent
November 18, 2020
Vera had a pretty rough childhood. She grew up in a house where hoarding was a speciality. It was so unclear that she chose to grow up as a loner rather than having any of her childhood friends

actually see the filth that she was living in, which turned her into an obsessive neat freak. She has to keep everything neat and tidy or the nightmares of her childhood return. When she's pregnant with her first child, she comes to realize that this obsession can be used in a productive manner by becoming a door-to-door saleswoman. And she's great at the job, making sales left and right, which eventually leads her deeper and deeper into remote, rural areas. It's one afternoon, when she takes a turn down an unnamed road, and approaches a house that would make just about anybody's hair stand on end, that she makes her worst mistake. She's just pulled up to the lair of The Slob.

This book should come with a giant warning label on its cover. I love extreme horror, but I even had trouble reading this one. It just doesn't let up. There's so much disgusting, vile, nasty crap packed into this little book that I even had to put it down and take a break because I felt on the verge of throwing up.

In other words, I loved it.

Michael Cushing

JAILBROKE



Brian Asman
Mutated Media
January 26th 2021
This book was my first read by the multi-talented San Diegonian, Brian Asman. Asman's work reminded me a bit of bizzaro legend CMIII peppered with a bit of

underground horror master Edward Lee, as well. Jailbroke is a futuristic novella, tickling science fiction bizzaro splatterpunk... If that is even a thing, Asman has made it so. Jailbroke centers on a humorous interstellar hurling cruise through space with Kelso, a working class slacker upon the spacecraft "Fedex Amazon." Security officer Londa James, a cybernetically enhanced half-terran, together with Kelso, fight against jailbroke Als who have developed a taste for human flesh. This novella has it all, heavy gore, sexbots, cultural references, commercialism, and satire. Elon Musk (the latest incarnation, anyhow) is the god they worship and that isn't even the weirdest part. It's a lot of information and action packed into this 120-page space, plus includes a bonus short story called "The Universal Language." Asman is certainly someone to look up on brianasmanbooks.com and check out what he's up to next because its not just books this guy writes! Comics, Films, and more. Asman lives and breathes the lifestyle.

Demonika

GONE TO SEE THE RIVER MAN



Kristopher Triana
Cemetery Dance
Publications
March 12th 2020
This novel centers around the story of Lori, and her infatuation with an infamous serial killer by the name of Edmond Cox. Lori has been exchanging letters and

making visits to the prison to see Edmond now for a while. She wants to prove to him that she is his number one fan and is worthy of his love. So, when he asks her to perform a task for him, she is more than willing to do so. This task consists of visiting the Cox family cabin in the small town of Killen, retrieving a key from a chest, and bringing said key up the river to a legend known only as The River Man.

The underlying story centers on Lori's relationship with her family. Exactly how does somebody grow into the kind of person that would want to form an intimate relationship with a serial killer? What exactly could go wrong in their upbringing to want to associate depraved acts of violence with love? Or to believe that somebody that has slaughtered almost two dozen women is capable of love?

This is a different tale from Triana than what I'm used to, since there's only one or two scenes of outright gore and violence. However, the story that he tells within its pages is one that is going to make your blood run cold and will haunt you. Triana is quickly becoming one of my favourite horror authors and this is another gem in his collection.

Michael Cushing

Submit your inquires or reviews to demonika@absoluteunderground.ca



The Living: 1982

Interview with drummer Greg Gilmore
By Ira Hunter and Jason Matthew Shane Maher
Historic Seattle Punk Pioneers – The Living – To Release Recording Debut From 1982

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to today and what are you best known for?

Greg Gilmore: This is Greg Gilmore and I'm probably most widely known for being a member of Mother Love Bone.

AU: You were also in an earlier band called The Living, can you give me a quick origin of that band?

GG: Yeah, I answered an ad in a local music and entertainment magazine we used to have here in Seattle called *The Rocket*. They were looking for a drummer, I answered it and so we began.

AU: Who else was in the band? And what would it say on their Tinder profiles?

GG: John Conte was a singer and his profile might say: "Who am I?" Todd Fleischman was the bass player and his profile would say, "I'm awesome and good looking," and Duff McKagan, of Guns N' Roses fame, his profile would also say, "I'm awesome."

AU: How does it feel to have your band The Living revisited nearly 40 years later?

GG: It's turning out to be pretty interesting, actually. Getting a record out has been a work in progress for at least eight years. We've had three other near misses with various deals to get it out, but the attention we're getting this time is already bigger than anything I had expected or hoped for. It feels pretty good to finally have it to see the light of day.

AU: Why was the album not released originally back in 1982?

GG: The recording wasn't done as a record, we just did some recording and the band only lasted for seven or eight months. At that time, we were just more focused on playing and record making had not evolved yet in the greater consciousness of the scene here. There was a tendency to just play, we just loved to play. Though we all loved the recording we didn't make the record, it wasn't our focus or our intent at the time.

AU: Was the Seattle punk scene like in 1982? Who were some other bands around at that time?

GG: It was small. Who else was there? The Refusers, they're kind of an iconic institution here.

The Silly Killers is another great band. D.O.A. is not a Seattle band, but we did at least one show with them and they were sort of mentors for us. They're great guys. We looked up to them. They're a great band.

AU: It's been stated that The Living were ground zero for the Seattle sound. Do you agree?

GG: Well, that's a pretty bold claim. Definitely if you listen to the recording, it speaks for itself. It kind of says it all. So to look back now and listen to it, well, yeah, there's just some kind of nexus, some moment there. We were certainly of it and represented it well, I'll say that much.

AU: Are there any standout tracks that you're most stoked on?

GG: All of them really. A Promise, the opening track on the record, is a favorite. That whole experience was so fun and fast and easy. We were really ready and it's a bunch of great tunes. There is one sort of love song, "A Song For You." It's close to being a pretty viable pop anthem.

AU: How would you describe the band's sound?

GG: It pretty well represents what the Seattle thing is, I hesitate to use

the "grunge" word. It's not a term widely used in Seattle itself, that's for the outside world. But the Seattle thing was to infuse the hard rock into the punk rock. So, I think that'd be the most simple way to describe it and this record is full of that.

AU: How did this all come to be for the band's music to be released on Loosegroove Records? Who had the masters this whole time?

GG: John Conte had the original 8-track masters and he had them transferred digitally. I got hold of the files and mixed the record. Then a couple years ago, I went out to lunch with Stone (Gossard) and I told him my tale of woe and struggle getting this record together. He wanted

to hear it so I sent him some files. He dug it and eventually that led to him and Regan (Hagar) deciding they wanted to put the record out.

AU: Any chance The Living may reunite for a few shows?

GG: I can pretty much guarantee there will be no live performances.

AU: You were also in another band with Duff McKagan called 10 Minute Warning, any thoughts or memories of that band?

GG: Yeah, it was another great band. Another band that people refer to as punk rock but it never really seemed punk rock to me. I just thought it was hard rock played real fast. There was a record recently made from a bunch of lost tapes by the band. It's called *The Lost Months*.

AU: Your most well known band is of course Mother Love Bone. It's been nearly 31 years since the release of the album Apple and since that time, the band has gotten so much bigger and beloved throughout the years. What are your thoughts today on that period of your life and Andrew Wood?

GG: It was a fantastic period, a lot happened in a short time. A lot of things that have affected my whole life ever since, it's shaped everything having been part of that, it was awesome - a great experience.

Andy was a character, he was funny, a natural performer. Playing live you can always count on him to be there to come up with something.

AU: You were also part of a Mother Love Bone reunion with the four surviving members back in 2018 for the tribute show that was held at the Neptune theatre. How was that experience for you? Any chance there might be another Mother Love Bone reunion show?

GG: It was fun, really fun. That's the second

time we've got together for a similarly brief performance. It's fun playing with those guys and I would do it anytime.

AU: Are you currently still drumming today or playing with any bands?

GG: I do still play, mostly recordings. I haven't done a regular band sort of thing for quite a while, but I am working with a friend of mine, Andy Colliar, in Scotland right now over the internet. It's called Dog Watch.

AU: So The Living album is called 1982. Is it going to be on vinyl and CD? What's the date of the release and how can people get it?

GG: Vinyl and digital and the release date is April 16th. Three colors of vinyl. Pre-order on the Loosegroove Records Instagram.

AU: This is going to be our 420 issue. Do you partake of the herbal remedies?

GG: On occasion, I do. Not much. Edibles for me when I do.

AU: Final words for Canadian fans.

GG: I love Canada, I do, I do. If you were more South than North I could imagine putting some effort into living there.

AU: How do people find you online?

GG: Just random Google stuff I guess and despite what you might find on some of those pages, I was never a member of Skin Yard and that's all I have to say about that.

AU: Well, thank you for resurrecting these tracks and maybe some music from the past might be the best music of the future.

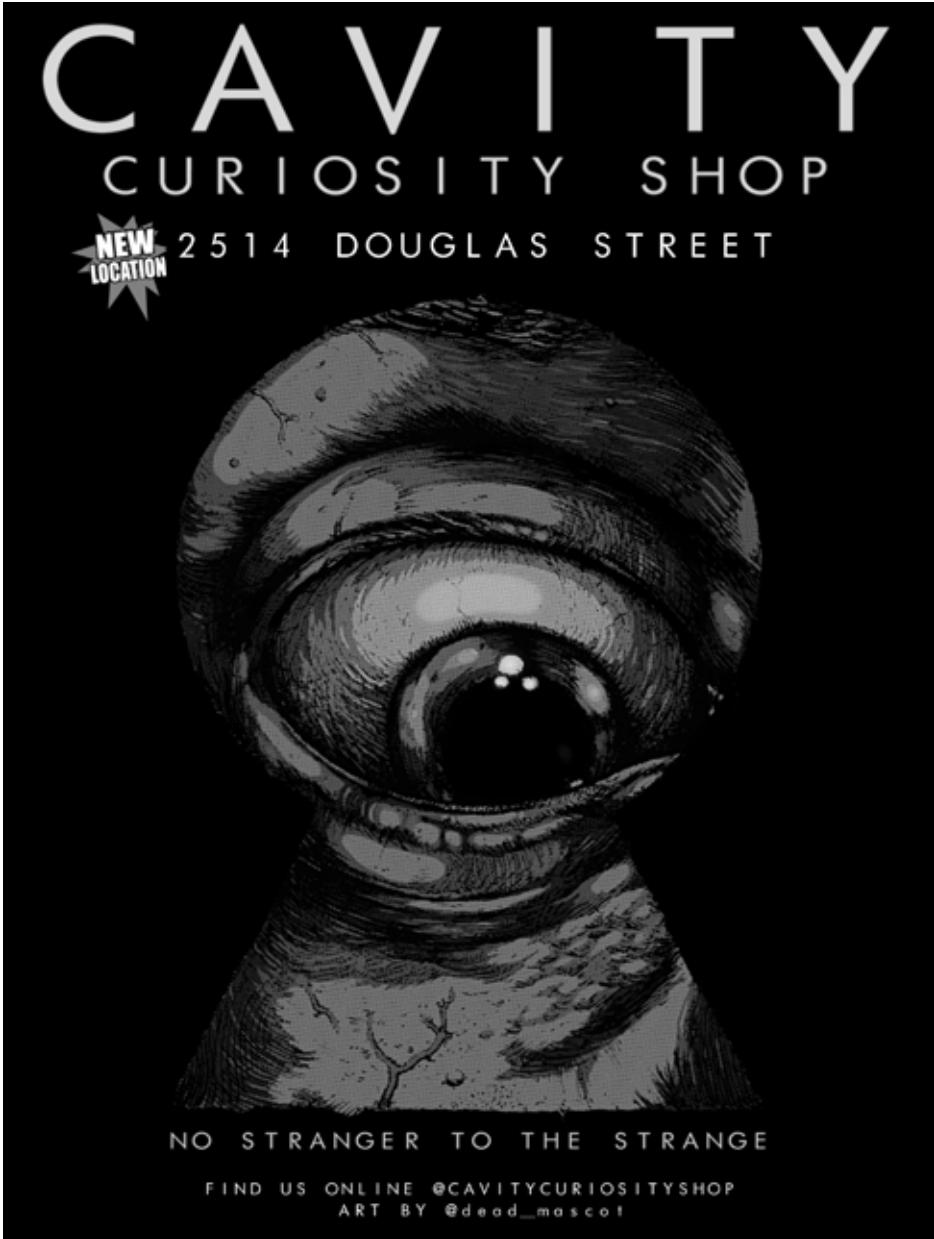
GG: Yeah, would that be ironic.

<https://orcd.co/theliving1982>

[instagram.com/loosegrooverecords](https://www.instagram.com/loosegrooverecords)

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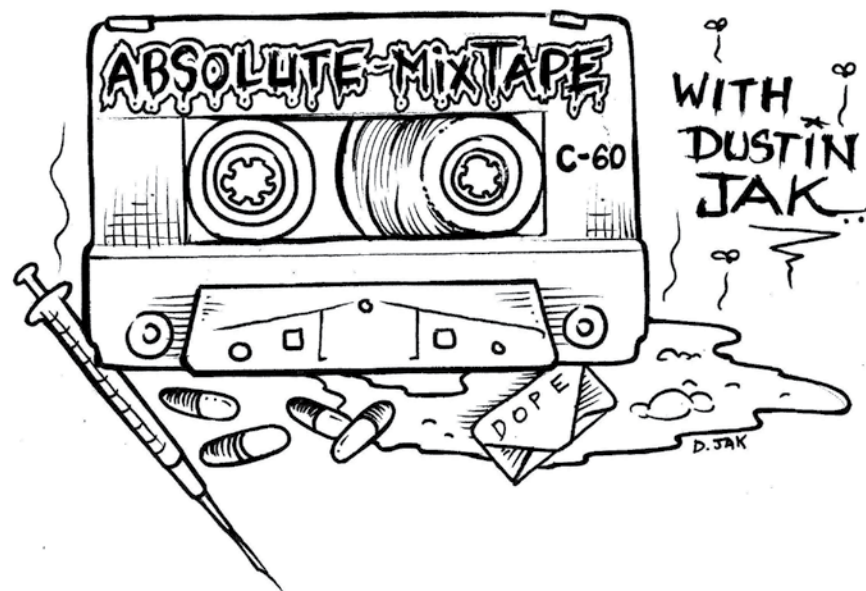
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Motörhead - "Speedfreak"
Sick Pleasure - "Speed Rules"
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Ozzy Osbourne - "Lightning Strikes"
Redd Kross - "Frosted Flake"
Redd Kross - "Burn Out"
Rich Kids on LSD (RKL) - "Pothead"
Turbonegro - "Zonked Out (On Hashish)"
Men At Work - "Who Can It Be Now?"
Twisted Sister - "Like A Knife In The Back"
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Coolio - "Smokin' Stix"
Tone Loc - "Cheeba Cheeba"
Fang - "Fun With Acid"
The Besmirchers - "Needles in My Feet"
Slaughter & the Dogs - "I'm Waiting For The Man"
Ramones - "Chinese Rocks"
N.W.A. - "Dope Man"
Jefferson Airplane - "White Rabbit"
Every Smut Peddlers song
Witchfinder General - "Free Country"
Scorpions - "China White"

Three Dog Night - "Mama Told Me Not To Come"
Hell's Kitchen - "Mind Melt"
The Darkness - "Givin' Up"
Gang Green - "Alcohol"
Bob Dylan - "Everybody Must Get Stoned"
The Rolling Stones - "Sister Morphine"
The Police - "Reggatta de Blanc"
The Tubes - "White Punks on Dope"
Black Sabbath - "Sweet Leaf"
Blue Cheer - "Out Of Focus"
Kill Allen Wrench - "My Bitch Is A Junky"
Dayglo Abortions - "How Low Will You Go?"
Dayglo Abortions - "Drugged and Driving"
Guns N' Roses - "Mr. Brownstone"
Thin Lizzy - "Opium Trail"
David Bowie - "Ashes To Ashes"
David Bowie - "TVC 15"
George Baker Selection - "Little Green Bag"
Ramones - "Now I Wanna Sniff Some Glue"
Chicago - "25 Or 6 To 4"
Alice Cooper - "Serious"
Black Sabbath - "Behind The Wall Of Sleep"
W.A.S.P. - "Blind In Texas"
Alice Cooper - "Blue Turk"
Witchfinder General - "Love on Smack"
Aerosmith - "Combination"
Boz Scaggs - "Lido Shuffle"
Steve Miller Band - "The Joker"
Wayne County & the Electric Chairs - "Mean Muthafuckin' Man"
Jim Carroll Band - "City Drops Into the Night"
U.S. Bombs - "Her and Me"
Fully Crazed - "Give Me Drugs"
Master P - "Ghetto D"
Grandmaster Flash - "White Lines"
The Stupids - "Peruvian Vacation"
Zeke - "Let's Get Drugs"
Once again any Smut Peddlers song
Arlo Guthrie - "Coming Into Los Angeles"
Grateful Dead - "Truckin'"
Ringo Starr - "No No Song"
Jimi Hendrix - "Purple Haze"
Too Short - "Coke Dealers"

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Batter Up!

A Cursed Blessings Free Sampler...

And It's Not Even Your Birthday!

By Billy Hopeless



Ok kids, here's the golden rules of the game. If I dig you and how ya play, I might pitch an interview with you, if I dig you and you advertise in this program the odds of a hit are better, and if I dig you, you advertise on the monster scale and boost my team with a new single well now yer an all star. The mighty Al Nolan stepped up and covered all three bases with his new punk metal and rock record label Cursed Blessings and thus hits a grand slam bringing his winning Canadian team to home plate. Two eggs, two pancakes two slices of bacon and two sausages, and if yer still hungry, after yer done we'll offer you a free sampler! Bon appetit and play ball!

Absolute Underground: So Al, how the hell did you go from fronting the Canadian punk outfit known as the All Mighty Trigger Happy to starting yer killer punk/metal/rock label Cursed Blessings and why would you make such a crazy next move in the game of risk towards rock domination?

Al Nolan: I have had a big mouth forever. Always complaining about everything. Especially music. I've always thought labels etc were missing out on certain acts. I've bugged labels about certain bands (that we are releasing) in the city. No one wanted to do anything... So I quit drinking & partying about two years ago. Put my money where my mouth is and released a Dragged In record... and now we're on our way to having approximately 13 releases before Xmas 2021...

AU: What is the label's mantra or slogan?

AN: "Play Like You're Supposed to be Here."

AU: No Poseurs, I get it! What do you look for when yer choosing bands to release? Pro's only, pro gear, pro image, pro attitude, no druggies?

AN: I have to love it. Not here to make money, or exploit. I absolutely love music.

Bands are beautiful, ugly, interesting, and stupid. Haven't a clue most of them. Others don't need labels. Hopefully we are a happy medium.

I've made mistakes in my career, big ones. So I want to help guide and push them to succeed.

Image is crucial to certain sounds. Polishing is something we can help with. Mostly our roster are seasoned professionals that have been burned or burned out enough to know what they want and they know how to get it.

AU: Well you're slaying it with top shelf Canadian assault and vinegar bands like Sacrifice, Malhavoc, Hellaphant, The Cola Heads, Fully Crazy (featuring the magic of Merlin), oh and my personal fave, No More Moments. But let me ask you this if the head office is on fire and you can only save one band's master tape, which one do you grab?

AN: My Banzai Records Collection.

AU: Way to stay neutral, Banzai was a great label. Speaking of music pimps, did you look at or speak to any other labels for advice or modelling examples before starting this choose your path to adventure? Like Joe Shithead of Sudden Death Records, perhaps since you did play the fictional version of him in the theater production of Hard Core Logo, it would have been like hello shithead, this is dick, right?

AN: I've been doing this for almost 30 years. I don't know everything but I know a few things.

I've asked some for their secret, been asked what was mine, timing has been our best friend. The pandemic was going to crush some people's careers. We provided something to look forward to. We need music. It's oxygen. I knew what I wanted to see. So I got my buddy Doug Smart

to make the vision happen. If it wasn't for Doug Smart, we wouldn't be having this conversation. I was cast as "Joe Dick" in Micheal Scholar's Stage Version of *Hard Core Logo*. 'Twas enlightening...

AU: Yes but we all know Joe Dick was based loosely on Joey Shithead so let's just say Shit Dick and move on to a different cast, who all do you have on staff at the label and

what are their cool Iron Maiden album credit nicknames?

AN: We have Doug "The Vice of Everything Nice" President & Label Manager. Gabe "Thirtyteen" Khoury Press & Publicity. Looking for interns/street team etc, ourbandisrad@cursedblessingsrecords.com

AU: What's in a name anyways? Muc from SNFU has recently got a label to release a five-song EP of previously unreleased SNFU tracks entitled "A Blessing But With It A Curse." Did he approach Cursed Blessings with a blessing but with it a curse? 'Cause

HOPELESSLY DEVOTED TO YOU

that would have made sense to me.

AN: A good friend of mine/ours Barry Mantle is releasing all the SNFU stuff currently. Almighty Trigger Happy are also in Chase the Glory Records. Barry is a great guy. Works hard for his bands. An Inspiration. A coincidence about the name Muc chose? I hope Barry sends me a copy.

AU: Hey can you ask for an extra copy for me, that's a pricey piece of pig they got there. So what are some of your fave all time records that hit you the same as the first time you heard 'em?

AN: Kiss *Alive*, Max Webster *High Class in Borrowed Shoes*, Metallica *Ride the Lightning*, First Iron Maiden record... I knew history & theory of RnR before I heard the legendary records. I read a lot as a kid.

AU: Now on a smaller but equally dear to me scale, let's talk singles and B sides.

A good friend of mine Josh Atomic who runs a cool label called Neon Waste was saying that due to the heightened costs of production and shipping the 7-inch is a bitch to release and may become obsolete. What your opinion on the 45 revolution?

AN: There is something for everyone. We are trying to offer a little extra. Bundles, etc. Options with merch etc... Make it fun. Love you to buy our stuff in stores, but you get more goodies from mail order and deal with us directly.

AU: Well since we're talking about how size doesn't matter let's end with this hot topping topic. Records always remind me of pizza and every joint in every town always claims to have the best. So Mr. Al Nolan, why should the music hungry

people out there believe that your greasy wheels are the best in town? Oh and does pineapple belong on vinyl?

AN: We make an honest to goodness pie. Timeless recipe passed on from platform boots to doc martens & vans. All the cheese you need... with vegan options. A modern taste of a true

renaissance food that has been available forever (by other makers) but hopefully won't give you indigestion like the rest. With or without pineapple.

AU: Bonus question changing the game but keeping to Canadiana and pointlessness of this match. As we all know basketball was actually invented by a Canuck who would win in a three on three game of maple basket. Rush or Triumph?

AN: VENOM!

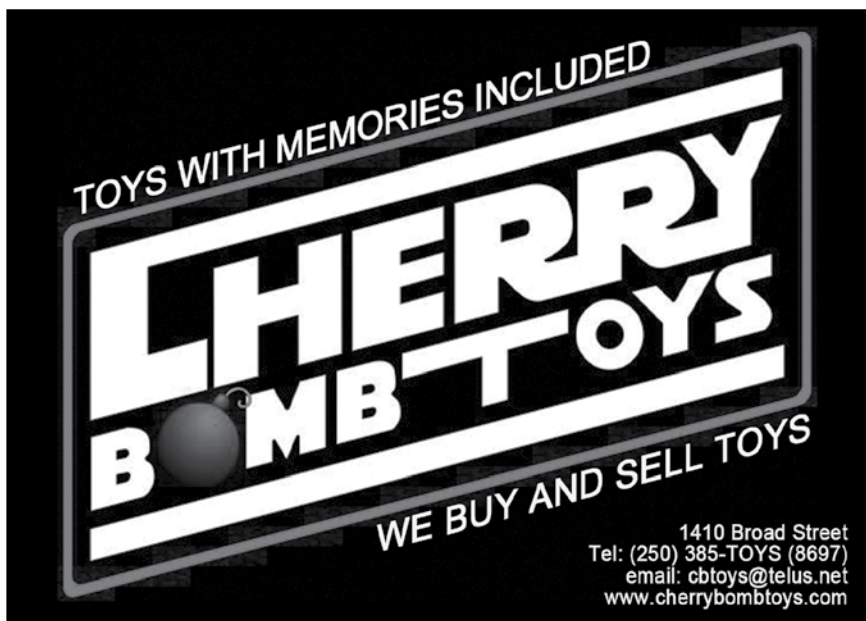
AU: That would normally be a foul as Venom though a

trio, were not Canada, but as they did release the Canadian Assault EP and guitarist Mantis does look a lot like Geddy Lee these days, we'll give you an eh for effort and get to the true north strong and free offer I spoke about at the start of this column. How do our readers get a hold of the free sampler platter?

AN: Find the ad in this magazine and email us, it's as simple as that.

AU: Well there ya have it sports fans, trust me this franchise is going places, has an awesome selection of tasty offerings and when you try the sampler, you'll be back as a regular diner!

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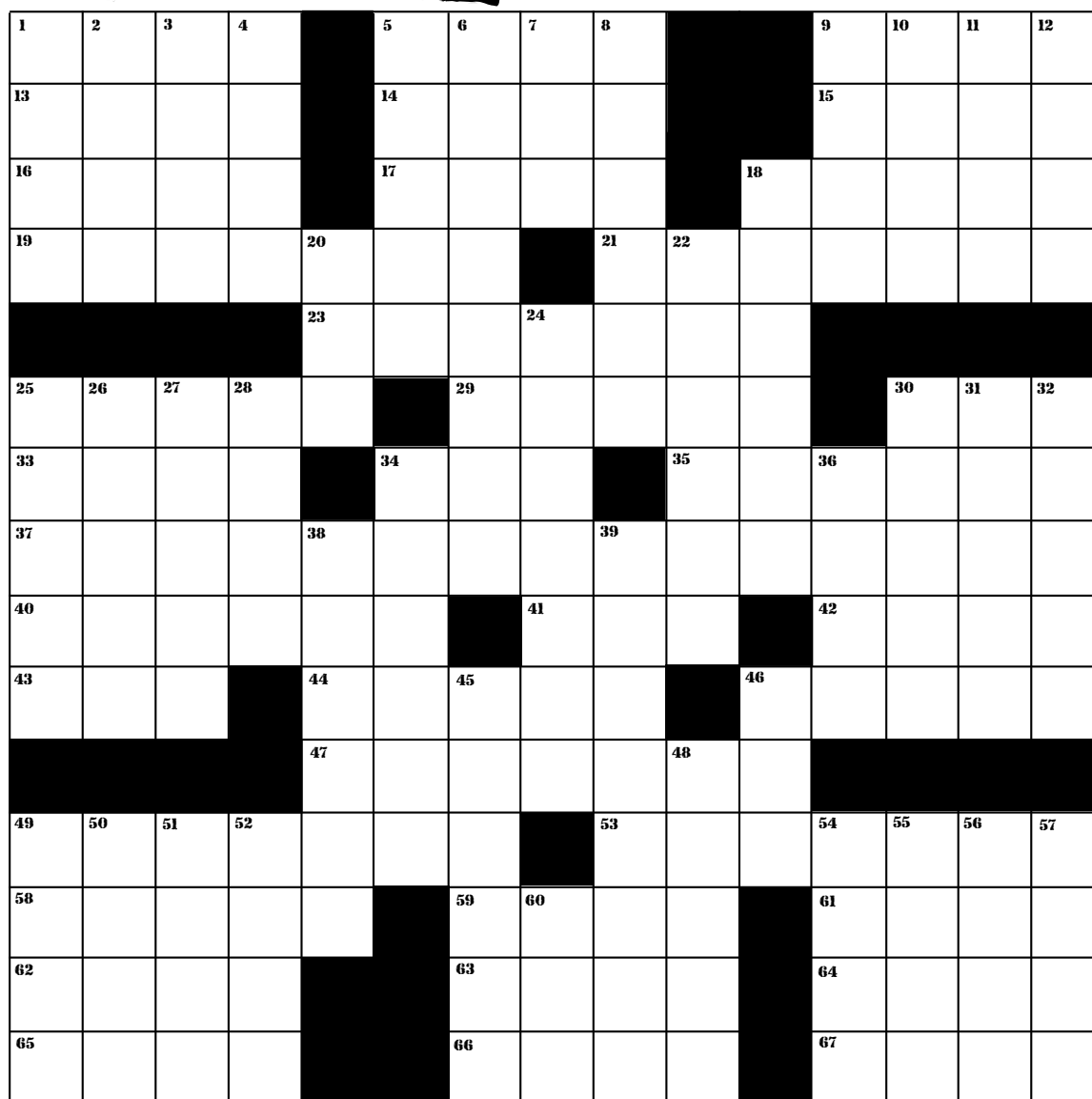
UP IN SMOKE

ACROSS

1. World's top finance companies
5. It's set in Liberty City
9. The Beatles
13. Rock's partner
14. Realizations
15. Horny mountain goat
16. "To _____": Exactly
17. You can take one or plug one
18. Bouton's baseball book
19. They provided us with a lot of "Entertainment" in '79
21. Summer drinks
23. Gary of "New Orleans"
25. Gob's "_____ You Calling"
29. It's a valuable or useful thing
30. Sound of '77, UK Subs style
33. This means "no" in Nuremberg
34. Montreal squad
35. She was fired from "The Mandalorian"
37. Nursery rhyme pie filling
40. Tires have them
41. A sexy change (abbr.)
42. Take off
43. Special computer keys
44. Severe or intense
46. Many times over
47. Gives up
49. Rivals of the GOP
53. Like a Dalmatian
58. Three dimensional representations
59. Give a _____
61. Charlie Chaplin's fourth wife
62. Black
63. About to discover
64. They hang out in golf clubs
65. Blackjack
66. Ian MacKaye's first band, The _____ Idles
68. How some people in their 30s describe themselves?

DOWN

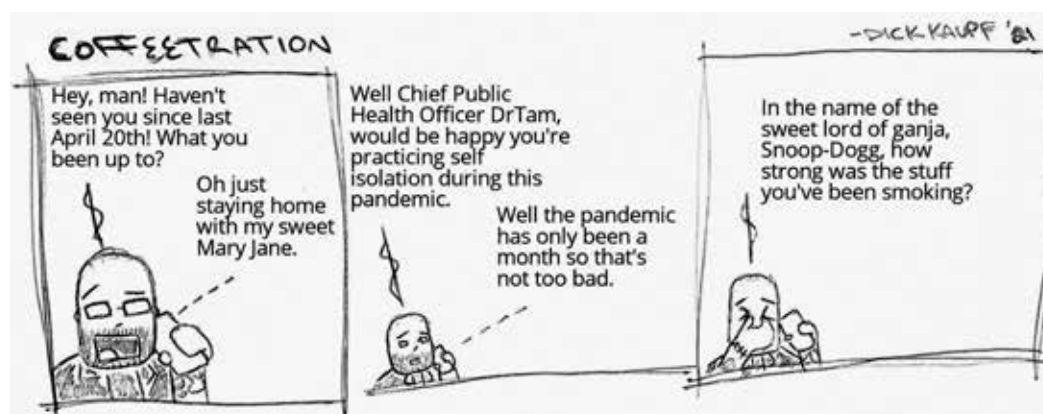
1. Toot your own horn
2. Tiny bit
3. Matlock
4. Like most stools and animals
5. Drives
6. It's purple in pool
7. Miniskirt-wearing K-pop band



CROSSWORD NO. 38

APRIL 20, 2021

8. Band who popularized "ACAB"
9. Italian automaker
10. Skilled
11. Lugosi
12. Off-road vehicles
18. Six-pack highlight?
20. "____ House" from Madness
22. Top passenger levels of the Titanic and its sister ships
24. US spies during WWII
25. Just out of the medals
26. Rock sister act
27. One in Bonn
28. Lawrence Welk: "A one _____ two..."
30. Sophia Loren's Ponti
31. DNA mutation
32. Red Hot Chili Peppers single
- from 2002
34. Basis for "American Hustle"
36. Randell from "Rock and Roll High School"
38. 1998 mockumentary romcom
39. Heavy oil
45. Outcome
46. 40 after
48. Supermodel Kate
49. Fredericton nightclub
50. Poor migrant worker
51. Musk
52. Fed up
54. Many a music list
55. Amos
56. "Dukes of Hazzard" spinoff
57. Hyphen
60. Metallica's first Top 40 tune



Absolute Live Reviews

Filthy Party!
Rectal Wench
Impure Injection
Globularcyst
April 10, DAFA Club,
Tianjin China

Disciples of gore, grind, smut, porn and all things found in the sex shops or the sewer found their chapel with one of two special concerts put on by Chinese goregrind heroes Rectal Wench to celebrate the release of their new album, *Judgment of Whore Labia From the Sewer Throne*, out now via Splatter Zombie Records. The dildos and blow up dolls were set up around the bar while a single toilet was set up on stage, ready for the bowel movements to come from the performers



who live and breathe this endearingly depraved way of life.

Shows like this have a history in China, with Gore Feasts taking place as early as 2013 - featuring bands like Rectal Wench, along with the now defunct Cave Have Rod, Ready to Die, and The Dark Prison Massacre. Cave Have Rod made it to the Obscene Extreme Festival in the Czech Republic, and the show tonight was like a mini version of the

said grind event.

Newcomers Globularcyst were the first to take the toilet-christened stage. This "vomiting pathological goregrind band" have been studying the medical scribes written by Carcass, Disgorge, and Viscera Infest and dressed in doctor's scrubs and Jig-Ai shirts, were a textbook example of new mutations within the Chinese goregrind scene, being a laxative for the rectal waterfalls to come later in the evening.

If The Dark Prison Massacre are heroes to Tianjin, than surely Impure Injection is the one man grindcore hero to Zibo. Without the extra man power of a drummer or bass player, Mr. Zhenfei Geng showed that just like his records, one man,

one mind with enough sick skill is enough to satisfy the brutal needs of a smut-hungry crowd. When needed, audience members, such as a man dressed as a banana and the sexual scream-moans of a female grinder, added to his catchy compositions. His latest EP "Gore in the North," features a song dedicated to Rectal Wench entitled, "Rectal Wench Has No Mandarin

Name," which means Chinese citizens have had to learn a couple of filthy English words to get into the headliners of the Filthy Party.

All three of these bands could very well be hits at the Obscene Extreme Festival, and the set by Rectal Wench very much conveyed the spirit of the festival, with blow up sex dolls, blow up sex aliens (with alien fucker written across their chests) and dildos

of all shapes and sizes to be beaten on, thrown about or dry humped by the band and audience members throughout the performance. The band, wearing lucha masks, tore through a 20 song set that included tracks spanning their lengthy career. It really brought out the best in people - the guy dressed in a banana costume peeled himself free of it and the clothes came off entirely for at least one overly enthused audience member. The toilet on stage was like a throne, often sat on as carnage ensued around it. The filthy kingdom had come undone! At the end of the set, after classic tracks, "Gore Gore Gore" and "King Anus", the emperors of the kingdom of feces, Rectal Wench, took a minute to vomit into the porcelain bowl. The scene afterwards was like a crime scene of murdered blow up dolls and aliens, who sadly couldn't make it to the Filthy Afterparty.

-Ryan Dyer

Golden Age Metal Festival
The Samans
Nine Treasures
Zuriaake
Black Kirin
Snowsedim

December 12, 2020,
66 Livehouse, Tianjin China

The first snow of the year appeared in Tianjin on this day and with it, five of China's most esteemed metal acts came into town for the Golden Age Metal Festival. Unlike other recent festivals which had a few filler bands, the five here were all top quality acts which could, and have, headlined their own tours. 66 Livehouse was jam-packed by the time the first band of the night got on stage, Snowsedim (or Snowfall). At the One Of Us III Metal Festival a few months back, they were the

final band to play, meaning that after nine acts, the crowd was spent. Here, their brand of modern folk metal was the beginning of an avalanche of energy which didn't let up all night and ignited the early arriving crowd like a New Year's firework.

Black Kirin have traded in a lot of the black metal aesthetic since the last time they came through town for high concept, dramatic storytelling under a blackened tapestry. Gone is the corpse paint but gained is a show that is all-encompassing, like a 45 minute drama or Chinese opera, only this story is that of some of the darkest times in China. An image I will never forget was as the band was band playing, on the video screen behind them (previously showing their "Nanking Massacre" video), an image that resembles a school photo of children slaughtered, while the choral voices of infantile spirits were heard accompanying the grieving shrieks of the vocalist. It was, in a word - powerful.

Zuriaake, meaning "Lake of Corpses" have created a mythology for themselves these past few years. Their costumes come across like Sunn O))) mixed with the first iteration of Ghost, though oriental. Their live show was ceremonious. First, tree branches with lanterns were set upon the stage. Then, incense was lit to set the mood. Then, the members, all dressed in ominous black robes and fishing hats, their faces concealed, slowly emerged to properly mystify the audience. A strange vial was opened and splashed upon audience members in the front rows about



three songs in like a black baptism. Their brand of atmospheric black metal was much like the incense which permeated through their set - lingering and potent, and when they left the stage, it was as if a spell had been lifted. As I said before, tonight was the first time it has snowed heavily all year, and I kid you not, when going outside for some fresh air after their performance, it was coming down heavily right after their set. It was something magical.

Recently the Mongolian band The Hu have received a lot of attention due to their unique brand of folk metal - making some cheeky commenters claim to be proud of being Mongolian despite not being a native of the country. Their cover of "Sad But True" by Metallica has certainly aided the hype. However, I would argue that Nine Treasures are just as, if not better than The Hu. This Inner Mongolian band creates folk metal songs that are infectiously catchy, and utilize a lot of the same instrumentation (such as the morin khuur), and throat singing seen by their brethren up north. When the band broke into "Wisdom Eyes," the audience became as unglued as a stable of horses after a wasp nest was tossed in it. Truly one of China's musical treasures.

I had a few preconceived notions about The Samans before catching them at this show. I had only heard their track "Whale Song," which has a chorus lifted from Linkin Park's



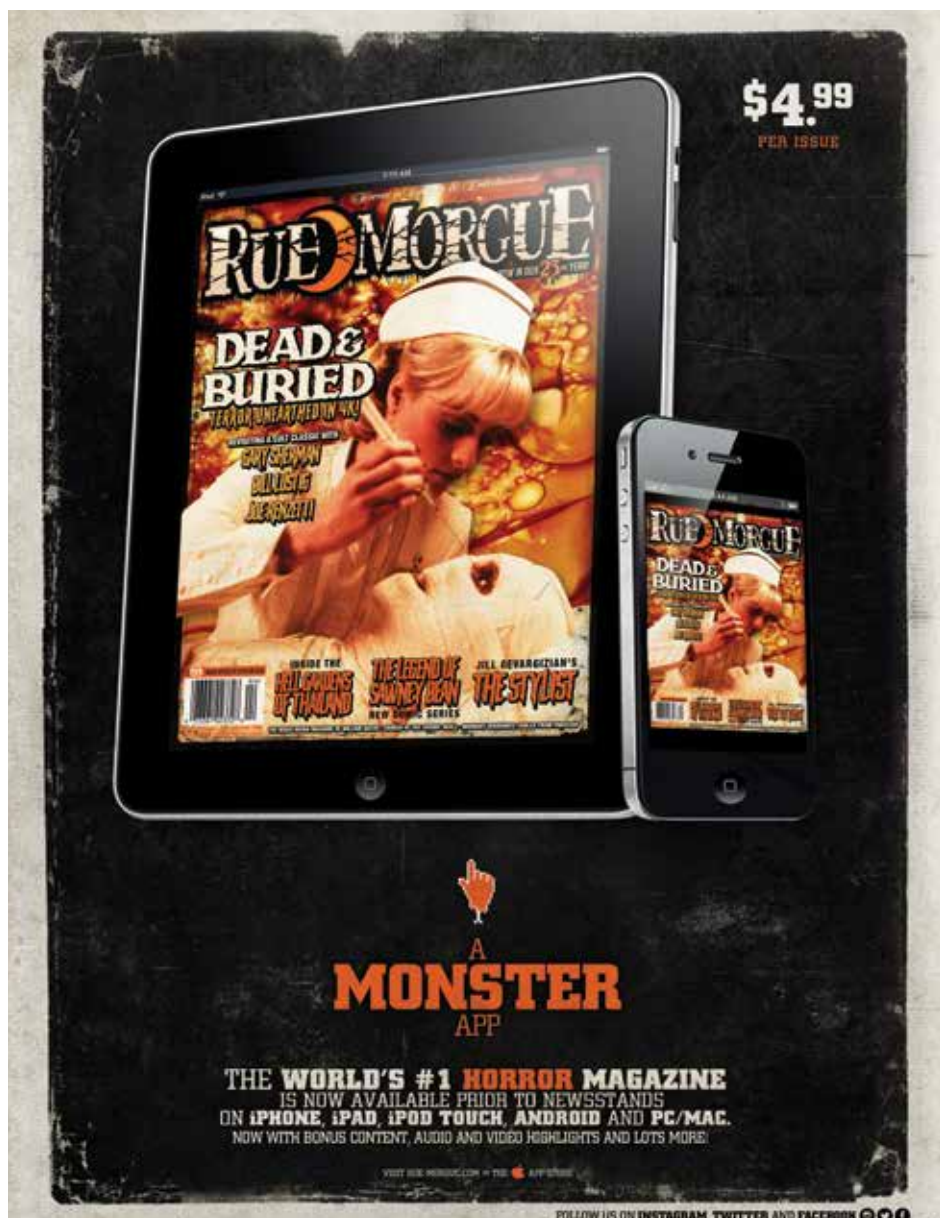
"Numb," which left me feeling uneasy. As the final band of the night, and not knowing much about them besides this, they had a lot to live up to.

Fortunately, the band stuck some ancient Chinese melo-death down my throat and relieved my ailments. The band has more in common with Rammstein or nu metal acts such as downthesun than Linkin Park. The vocals are rough and distorted, while songs like "Death March" and "Attila" have plenty of crunch in the riff department. Despite being quite heavy, they don't forget about their culture, and the odd folk melody can



be heard within the chaos. At this point in the night you'd expect the crowd to be tired, but during The Samans, the stage divers and crowd-surfers came out like gangbusters, giving one last go while covered in sweat before venturing out into the cold after the show, and to their ordinary lives the next day. As for this show - it was golden.

-Ryan Dyer



TIGER TATTOO



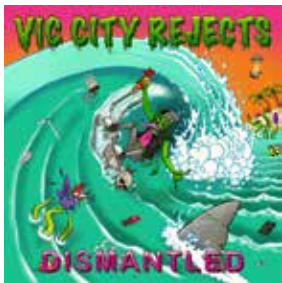
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Absolute Album Reviews

Vic City Rejects - Dismantled EP



When you go from young hooligan to grizzled old grouch in your local punk scene, it just becomes a matter of fact that you come to know almost everyone. As a result, most of the bands coming out consist of people you already hang out with. It is just math and science. For awhile now, my favourite local band consisting of dudes that I don't know really well has to be Vic City Rejects. Don't get me wrong, I consider these guys friends of mine, just that I haven't been in a band with any of the members (yet!).

Their latest offering is this four song serving of punk rock that lives right in the sweet spot. I case you're wondering what the "sweet spot" is, it the intersection where Ramones based surf punk meets gritty garage rock a la Candy Snatchers. It is a special place, where few bands manage to get the dosage just right. Vic City Rejects pull it off smashingly! Everything about these four songs had me bouncing around the room (as much as my arthritis would allow) and left me wanting more. I sure can't wait to see these guys live again, once that sort of thing is back in the mix. Get this!

- Ty Stranglehold

Rectal Wench - Judgement of Whore Labia from the Sewer Throne Splatter Zombie Records



Rectal Wench, the self-proclaimed (and who is going to oppose this?) filthiest band in China has released an unprecedented 73 minutes of goregrind with *Judgement of Whore Labia from the Sewer Throne*. They might be aiming to become China's version of GWAR or Ghoul with this overflowing toilet of grind, as they have adopted an almost superhero look as depicted on the album cover (illustrated by Stinky Kenny). There is also tale to be told around burning garbage cans with the album's theme and content so gather round and perk your ears - Society is ruled by sex dolls who are enslaving, killing, and fucking the people of earth.

It is a true marathon of gargled, bottom-end heavy, snare stabbing grind - with the odd *House of 1000 Corpses* or porn flick sample sprinkled in, but it is done with the earnest intent of having a good time (which is evident in their live shows, where they encourage the audience to fight evil blow-up dolls).

There are 30 tracks here which roughly cover the story, but there are also surprises, such as the origi-

nal versions of tracks "Mr. Meat's Steakhouse," "Drunken Anal Fisting," "Revenge of Queen Worm," "Mr. Banballow, I Presume," and "Double Dildo Triple Torture," all of which have beefed up re-recordings found in the first half of the album. The album also contains a few covers of tracks by GUT, CBT, SXRXXM and the band they took their name from, Lividity.

Despite its length, it's hard to feel bored with the album as the songs differ from each other enough - much like going into a fly-ridden public washroom with 30 different stalls - they're all an experience. It was produced by renowned Chinese producer Zhao Xiaodong, but worry not - the sound presented in songs such as "Cocky Cock" or "Sperm Cannon" is as gritty as it is groovy. Xiaodong's cat even vomited upon hearing the final product - as according to the band, and if that isn't a valid recommendation, I'm not sure what is.

-Ryan Dyer

FT.W. If It Can't Take A Joke - A Tribute to the Dayglo Abortions Thought Crimes MFG



Canadian institution The Dayglo Abortions finally get the due respect they deserve with this stacked

compilation album of 14 artists whom have been inspired by the Dayglo's particular form of self-deprecating hardcore punk. GWAR's "Isn't This Disgusting," featuring the final sessions of fallen guitarist Cory Smoot, is one of the standouts and certainly takes you back to the good old days when Dave Brockie and Cory were still with us. The same could be said for SNFU's "I Wanna Be an East Indian," representing one of the few Canadian entries on the disc - Death by Stereo being another with their faithful cover of "My Shit Stinks." The heaviest track found here belongs to Deicide, featuring guitar work by riffmaster Rob Barrett. Glen's demonic vocal approach goes surprisingly well with the speedy punk found on their cover of "Inside My Head". Ghoul's "Proud to be a Creepsylvanian" takes on "Proud to be a Canadian" with altered lyrics (pass me another rot-gut) which is fine - nobody is forcing them to say they're from Canada when they're not. Road Runner's "Land of the Midnight Sun" is surprising entry - an acoustic, porch jam tribute to this track about Vancouver Island. Municipal Waste are similar to the Dayglos in a lot of ways, and here they offer up "Black Sabbath," which with Tony's vocal approach, sounds as if they wrote it themselves. The album finishes up with a rendition you wouldn't want to meet alone in an alley, "Arg Fuck Kill" by DMOL. As far as tribute albums go, there is enough variety here to warrant repeated listenings. Think of it like Nativity in Dayglo.

-Ryan Dyer

GUT - Disciples of Smut Splatter Zombie Records



It has been quiet. A little too quiet. Fourteen years ago, GUT released their last album, *The Cumback*. For those 14 years, a chapel of sewage was being constructed, and is now released with *Disciples of Smut* on the fine Splatter Zombie Records label. Notify the bondage minded bishops and call in the oinking, piss stained pope and his dog chained disciples for a congregation of goregrind, bestial black metal, death metal, doom, noise and drone. The album has it all - intercut was nasty soundbites related to black magic, witchcraft or sometimes an ominous warning related to the song title such as with "Smothered with Austrian Chloroform." The album goes into subjects not often seen in goregrind, acting like an encyclopedia of smut. The slower, sewer sludge tracks are as comforting as a thick, flea ridden, shit smeared blanket. The six minute "Empire of the Centipede of Pigs and Hoes" is a notable crawl to the piss-stained electric chair while "Cacophonous Rites" is a bloated, bile filled intestine of a track which won't ease constipation.

The guest vocalists on the album include Martin Schirenc from Pun-gent Stench, Patrick Klopff from Disharmonic Orchestra, and Martin Matoušek from Gutalax, who make each song a self-contained peek

into different catacombs of filth and fury. Guaranteed to make listeners cum slowly.

-Ryan Dyer

The Shit Talkers - True Stories De Nada



My friend Liz asked me to review her new record. I was honoured. I love her band, The Shit Talkers.

I started by listening to it again. I tried to hit it song by song, like some kind of journalist that I'm not. It just wasn't working for me.

So let me just tell you what it's all about for me, The Shit Talkers write songs that are honest and hilarious.

This is full on, heart on your sleeve, punk. They are always reminding me of what I like about The Rezillos and Captain Beefheart. The Shit Talkers are a rockfest, with tongue always firmly planted in cheek.

I think achieving humour and rock at the same time is awesome and rare, and I think everyone needs to check them out.

- Randall Steffes

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Absolute Album Preview

We are just a mere three months into the year, but 2021 truly is shaping up to be the year of the Bohab! Following the announcement of GWAR's "Ragnarok" Rye and their brand new CBD line "Bud of Gods," your Lords and Masters have yet another surprise up their sleeve. May 28th will see the release of "The Disc With No Name," via Pit Records. The EP is a limited edition 12" picture disc. It is available for purchase at GWAR.net and indie retailers.

"The Disc With No Name" features unplugged versions of four GWAR classics, completely reimagined and rearranged with acoustic instruments. The idea to release the EP came during last year's quarantine following the band's heart wrenching, emotional and ridiculous acoustic performance for The A.V. Club during their quarantine sessions. With this release, the band looks back wistfully on eons of murderous rock and roll and the lonesome time of the great GWARANTINE of 2020.

Lead singer Blóthar the Berserker had this to say: "During the quarantine of 2020 I spent long, lonely days with my hand down my pants, hiding out in a fortress made entirely of rolls of toilet paper, drinking hand sanitizer and watching '1000-Lb Sisters'... which is business as usual for me. So I was relieved when I got the call to lay down some vocals on "The Disc With No Name." We recorded this record over the telephone, which was fine with me, because I can't stand to be in the same room as the other members of GWAR."

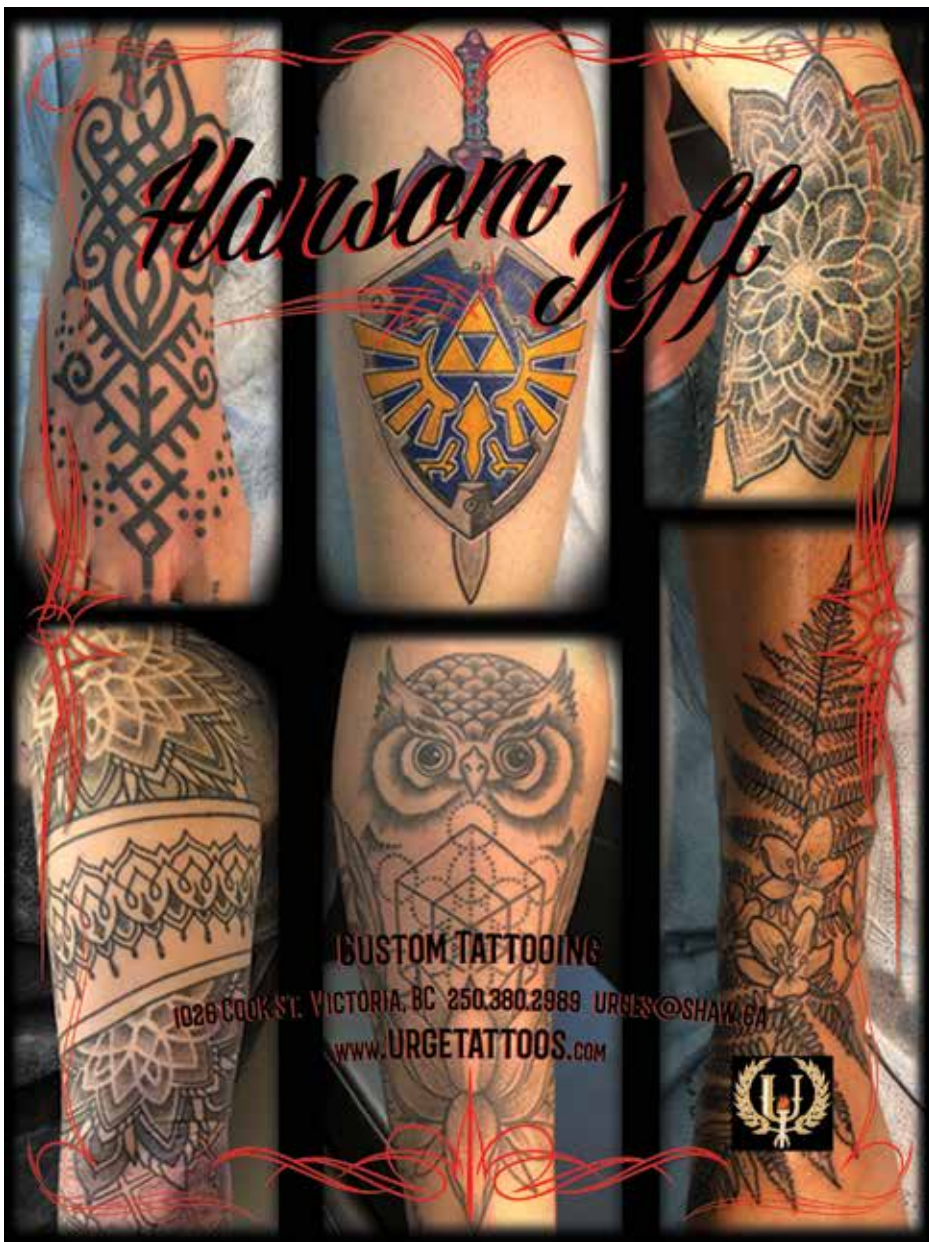
GWAR - Disc With No Name

Pit Records Release: 28 May 2021

I have always said "I have nothing against acoustic guitars, it's just when someone starts playing them..."

You know, when 'that guy' with the acoustic guitar is at a party and he is trying to be the center of attention while everyone wants him to tone it down a bit so they can get back to talking about themselves? Well, this little four song EP isn't that. It's short, sweet, to the point, four acoustic remixes on GWAR classics with everything you would want in acoustic vulgarity with a little outlaw western stank on it. I have heard that the first printing of the vinyl picture disc sold out before has even been released, so good luck finding a copy! I love that the name of the release sounds like a spaghetti western, the drawings on the picture disc and the music just go with that gritty old west feel, the whole package makes you hope we are gonna see a hangman's gallows at the next GWAR show we will finally see in person.

- Absolutus Slaxximus



Absolute Film Reviews

Slaxx Shudder Network

Slaxx is a sharply written horror-comedy which suggests not all fashion trends are worth the price. Director Elza Kephart created a well-meaning piece of Canadian horror which shows it's better to dress down than up, so certain individuals don't have to be the target of a pair of posessed pants!

With wanting to wear the latest designer products, Libby McClean (Romane Denis) is a follower rather than a trendsetter. She's in love with the CCC Family, a clothing outlet much like Eddie Bauer, and gets a job there. She doesn't bat an eye at being asked to update her wardrobe to this year's line. It's far worse than those who think they can stay current with Apple. They're a tech firm with the wow factor to impress than certain fabrics to make folks look dressed for success.

However, this girl's first day at the job isn't easy. She's bullied and told to conform. Craig (Brett Donahue) is quick to condescend and Shruti (Sehar Bhojani) is an unlikely ally.

I enjoyed the backstory which suggests "accidents" happen in the labour yards. The hints of where the cotton is grown and how it may be contaminated suggest a haunted object scenario. If only Annabelle the doll can look sexy in jeans....

The film doesn't bash viewers around either with these intrinsic moments. We're dealing with an industry that looks squeaky clean because they are all about supporting worthy causes, but ultimately, dirty secrets lay underneath the layers of bullshit they make up. The fun in this subgenre lays in which characters get their just desserts. There are some unlikable individuals in this film, and it's fun to watch them get torn apart. This lively



pair of jeans adjusts to accommodating different body types like Venom to various characters in the world of Spider-Man. It doesn't bond with its host, and rather wants to consume! As for how McClean managed to survive her first day, that's best left to be seen to be believed.

-Ed Sum





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Z2 Comics Spotlight!

By Ed Sum

Z2 Comics is a New York based independent comics label "where music and comics collide." They team musicians with artists to deliver interpretations of their albums, and simply go wild with it. In the case of those who have passed, they work the estates to ensure the vision is as the performer intended. This group was formerly known as Zip Comix.

What makes their releases special are limited edition reissues of the albums being visualized. They are on vinyl, more often than not, and for specific groups, will tailor each edition for something unique! Groups they've worked with include Gorillaz, Yungblud, Poppy, and Grateful Dead, and as for what's coming, on the slate are:

Dio - Holy Diver Graphic Novel

Available Now

Behold: the *Holy Diver* graphic novel – an original storyline inspired by one of heavy metal's most iconic album covers. Penned by acclaimed horror comics writer Steve Niles (*30 Days of Night*), the book will tell the tale behind the events leading to the powerful moment captured on the cover of Dio's debut album—definitively addressing 30 years of fan speculation. Why is the priest being thrown into the ocean? Who is truly the villain in this scenario?

All of these questions are exclusively answered for the first time within the 120 pages of this graphic novel.



Anthrax - Among The Living Graphic Novel

April-May 2021

In 1987, Anthrax unleashed a heavy metal & pop culture touchstone with the release of their historic album, *Among the Living*. Now, Anthrax & Z2 Comics invite you to explore the album like never before with this original anthology graphic novel!

Each song on the album is given an original story by an amazing creative team, along with extra content and the introduction of the new zombie 'Not Man' designed by horror legend Greg Nicotero (*The Walking Dead*)! Come on this dark journey into the '87 underground in America with these esteemed creators...



Ice Nine Kills: Inked in Blood Graphic Novel

April 27, 2021

Tying in with the events of Ice Nine Kill's next cinematic album, *The Silver Scream*, *Inked in Blood* follows a bullied teen super-fan who's convinced that her favourite frontman could never have committed the grotesque crimes for which he's now



standing trial. But when a well-intentioned show of support backfires, this super-fan finds herself locked in a life-or-death battle against a copycat killer whose depravity makes your favourite slasher films seem tame by comparison.

Get your icepicks handy, INK fans—it's going to be a bloodbath!

The Deluxe Edition of the graphic novel includes (Limited Edition of 3,000):

Special Oversized Hardcover Graphic Novel (Exclusive cover artwork)

Limited Edition Silver Vinyl Picture Disc LP of Ice Nine Kill's album *The Silver Scream*

Three never before seen 'Inked In Blood'-inspired Art Prints

Limited edition "VHS" slipcase for graphic novel

The Standard Edition (Hardcover) version of the graphic novel includes:

Hardcover graphic novel

The Standard Edition (Softcover) version of the graphic novel includes:

Softcover graphic novel

Machine Gun Kelly's Hotel Diablo Graphic Novel July 2021

Between Heaven and Hell lies a waystation for the soul—a place where your deeds in life are the keys to your eternity in the afterlife—at the Hotel Diablo. And it's Lidia Lopez's first night behind the front desk! Every guest's got a story to tell and a lesson to learn...



COMIC-GEDDON



Co-written by film and music superstar Machine Gun Kelly with Eliot Rahal (*Knock Em Dead*) and Ryan Cady (*Future State: Green Lantern*). Art by Martin Morazzo (*Ice Cream Man*), Victor Ibañez (*Jean Grey*), Amilcar Pinna (*Generation X*), Nelson Blake II (*Byte-Sized*), Roberta Ingranata (*Doctor Who*) and Rachel Smartt.

<https://z2comics.com>

UP IN SMOKE

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CROSSWORD NO. 38

APRIL 20, 2021



Gerry Jenn Wilson

Rock in peace, trash maven.

Originally from Winnipeg, Gerry Jenn became an instant bedazzled fixture in Vancouver's music scene. From her B-movie rock and roll 'zine *Trash Maven* to her long career playing in local bands (The Worst, the Cane Toads, Black Eye Buddha, Black Market Babies, Spank Machine, The Muscle Bitches, East Vamps, Grrrl) as well as cover bands (Bevo, Bad People, and 48 Crash) she was always a boisterous unignorable fast wick big bang, rock n roll explosion in a little fire cracker. Much like the owl lamp at the Railway Club, even if she was blocked by a patron in the corner of the bar you couldn't help notice her and if you didn't she'd make sure you knew of her presence. She had many ups and downs in life and with people living like an open tell-all book but always kept smiling and pushing forward like a true showbiz diva. Although the details of her tragic death are still un-disclosed, the known fact that she died with her dog makes me feel in my gut that she most likely died as she would rather than than leave her pup in the flames of a burning building. She was a good person, a great entertainer, a classic girl and will never be forgotten by anyone whose life stories she played a part in, no matter how big or small the role. The credits have ended, but the starlet forever shines .

- Billy Hopeless

In recent years Vancouver-based Gerry-Jenn Wilson was determined to write an autobiography. I suggested a title, *My Top Ten Bands* by Gerry-Jenn Wilson, chronicling the main part of her unique rock-&-roll career, now a Best\$eller that will never be.

There are scattered music-recordings of legendary local bands that she fronted, three CDs of her own bands were released, and many people have some video-footage of shows.

To help fulfill Gerry-Jenn's artistic dream of getting more of her music out into the world, as well as recognition due such an astounding body of work, this chapter-outline is a starting-point.

- 1) Hypnotic Wail (1989) Winnipeg
- 2) 48 Crash (1990) Suzi Quatro tribute-band, Vancouver
- 3) The Cane Toads (1991) singer for former The Enigmas
- 4) Spank Machine (1992-3) almost toured Japan
- 5) Black Eye Buddha (1994) almost recorded in New Orleans
- 6) The Muscle Bitches (1994) west-coast tour to California
- 7) JP5 (1995-2001) numerous line-ups, toured Canada plus the U.S. including South by SouthWest festival in Texas twice, *Hot Box* CD (1999)
- 8) The Bad People (2006/007) Cramps tribute-band as Poison Ivy, with Billy Hopeless as Lux Interior on two consecutive Halloweens
- 9) Li'l Guitar Army (2008) original singer
- 10) The East Vamps (2008-'16) all-girl band, 2 albums: *Drunk by 6* (2010) and *All Hit\$, No Mrs.!* (2015)

More than once I said "You're a Living Legend... please keep living!" To keep her spirit alive, I edited an Easter Trilogy to three obscure songs on YouTube:

"Plague" JP5 / "Love Glue" The East Vamps / "Mary Jane" Black Eye Buddha

- Peter Lipskis



Separating girls from the women

It wasn't easy finding the right crew for JP5. By Tom Hamilton

The question kept me coming back: I wanted the values of JP5. Why make three videos that look like it's all about me? Why devote nearly all the time to one person, the JP5's leader, Gerry Jenn Wilson?

Why charge \$600 for them? There, in the last video, we see Jenn, I wondered who she is. Jenn is one woman who nearly all have watched Gerry-Jenn Wilson. Who would pay \$600 for these last videos?

The biggest question to me in another question, the kind that motivated punk rock, why not? The answer to who is Jenn?

Star has the answers in six-hour rock tale

For True Fans Only trilogy earns its title

By Tom Hamilton

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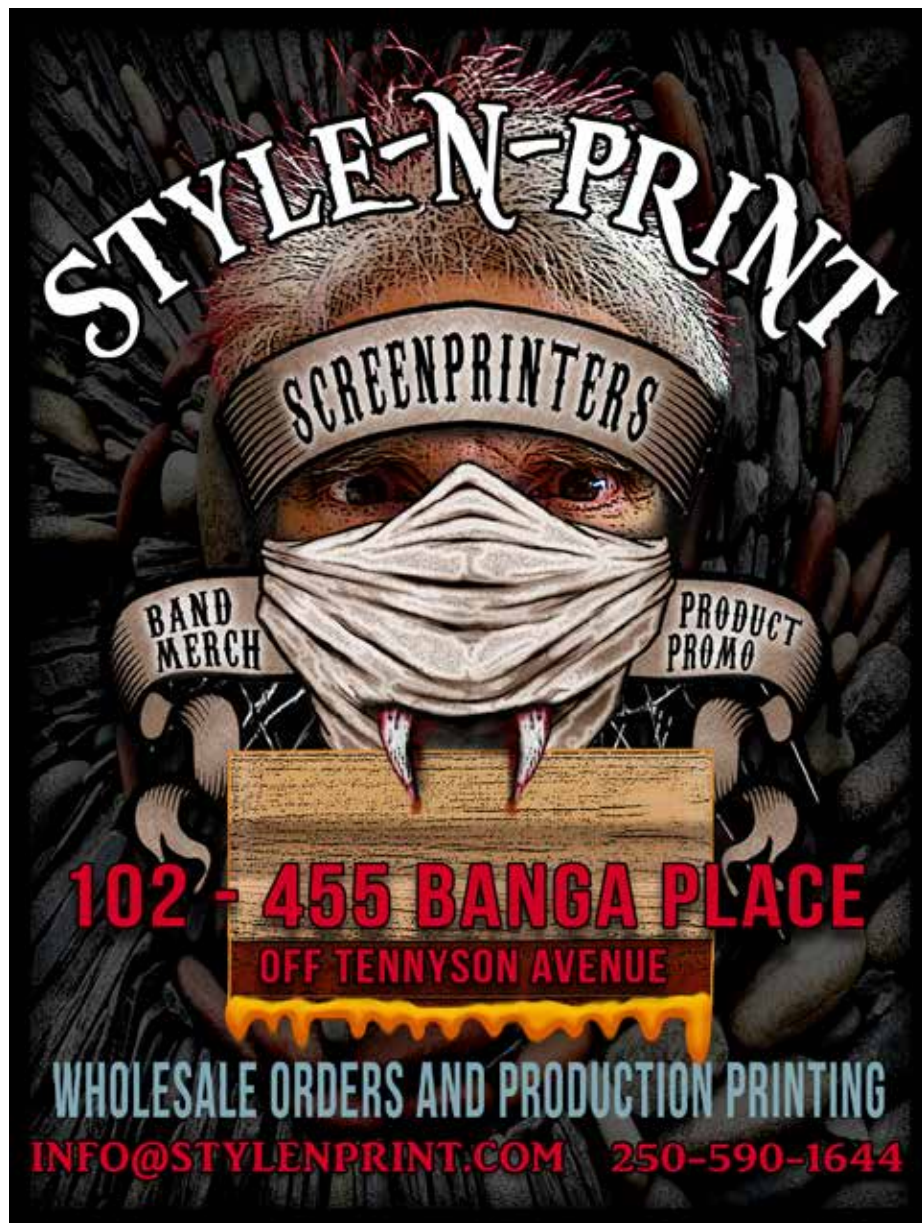
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REST IN POWER

Brent Allen Sorge

NOV 24, 74
~ APR 3, 21








Absolute Underground with deepest sorrows mourns the loss of one of our own, Mr. Brent Sorge. Brent was instrumental in Absolute Underground's initial expansion into the East, assisting with Distribution in Edmonton and Lethbridge, Alberta.

With a fire and passion towards music like no other, Brent would be found at live shows for the past 30 years in Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton and his hometown of Lethbridge, always making a mark on fellow concert goers.

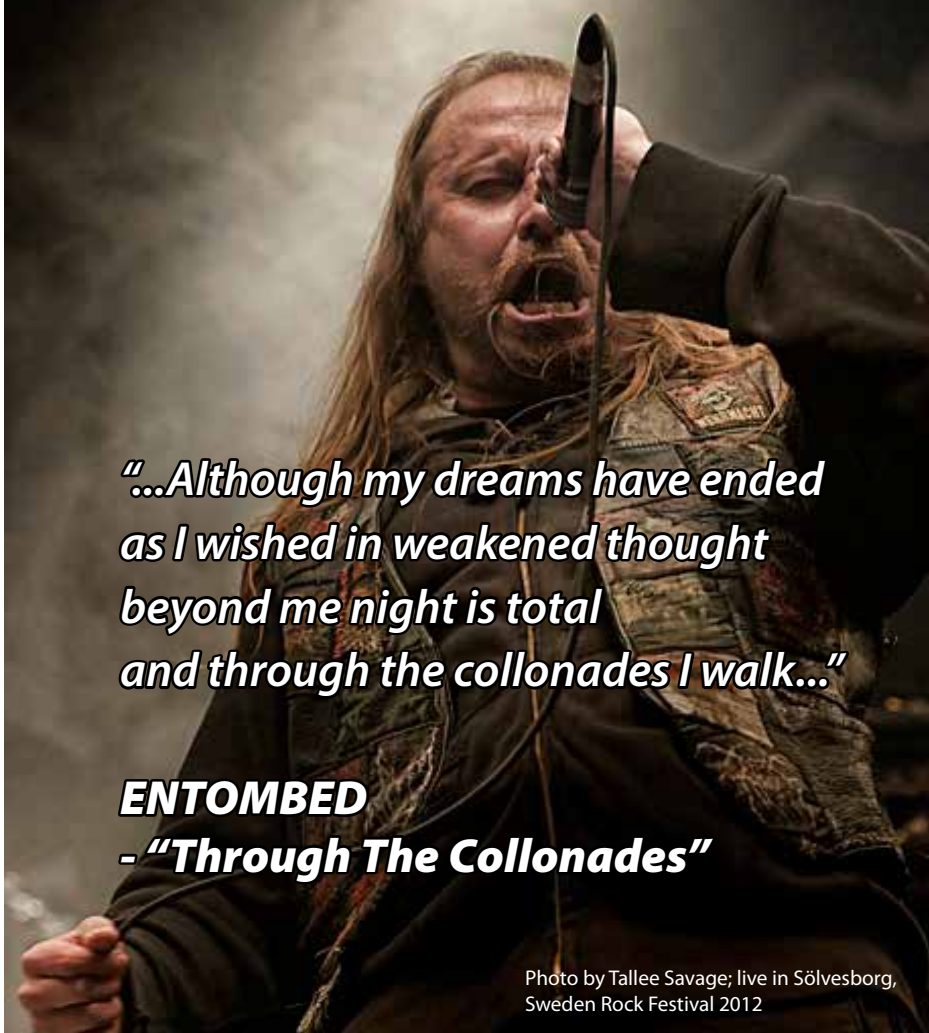
Brent would hold court with anyone at anytime discussing album titles, song names and any obscure fact, and now leaves a hole in our city's scenes, and in the hearts of bands, promoters, bar owners/staff and fellow ultimate music fans.

Attending a live concert was always an extreme event for Brent, often meaning travel and seeing Shellac, Neurosis, the Melvins, Nomeansno, Tool, Slayer, Suicidal Tendencies, Today is the Day or any band in general, it was always an experience that afterwards you would find engraved to your very soul, and THAT was always something he loved to recall and relive anytime you would see him. Gone but never to be forgotten, Thanks Brent. We love you.



Lars-Göran Petrov

1972 - 2021






*"...Although my dreams have ended
as I wished in weakened thought
beyond me night is total
and through the collonades I walk..."*




ENTOMBED
- "Through The Collonades"

Photo by Tallee Savage; live in Sölvesborg, Sweden Rock Festival 2012

WITH DEEP SADNESS I SAY GOODBYE TO MY BIG BROTHER SHANE CURRY.

SHANE GAVE ME MY MIDDLE NAME AND ALWAYS LOOKED OUT FOR ME. HE WAS MY DUNGEON MASTER GROWING UP AND ALSO INTRODUCED ME TO EVERYTHING FROM LED ZEPPELIN TO VENOM ONE FATEFUL SUMMER. I WILL ALWAYS MISS AND LOVE YOU, BIG BRO. I HOPE YOU CAN CONTINUE YOUR JOURNEY AND UNLOCK THE SECRETS OF THE UNIVERSE.

Shane William Curry

June 22, 1970 - February 7, 2021

KELLY ARTHURS aka KELLY JAK

1968-2021



RIP IN PEACE
Jaks Team Absolute Music
We will see you again someday bro

Design by Slutty Jak

BC Bud Depot

BC GOD BUD 75% INDICA 8-9 WEEKS 12-SEED PACK \$90 FEMINIZED \$150	THE PURPS HYBRID 7-8 WEEKS 12-SEED PACK \$90 FEMINIZED \$150	BLUEBERRY 80% INDICA 8 WEEKS 12-SEED PACK \$90 FEMINIZED \$150	GIRL SCOUT-COOKIES HYBRID 9-10 WEEKS 12-SEED PACK \$90 FEMINIZED \$150	NIGHT NURSE 80% INDICA 7-8 WEEKS 12-SEED PACK \$90
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SWEET GOD 70% INDICA 6-8 WEEKS 12-SEED PACK \$75	TEXADA TIMEWARP 70% SATIVA LATE SEPT. OUTDOOR 12-SEED PACK \$75	BC MANGO 80% INDICA 7-9 WEEKS 12-SEED PACK \$75	SHIATSU KUSH HYBRID 8 WEEKS 12-SEED PACK \$75	NEW STRAIN! TANGIE COOKIES HYBRID SATIVA-DOMINANT 8-9 WEEKS 12-SEED PACK \$90 FEMINIZED \$150
SWEET ISLAND SKUNK 70% SATIVA 8 WEEKS 12-SEED PACK \$75	CHEM FIRE HYBRID 9-10 WEEKS 12-SEED PACK \$75	THE BLURPS HYBRID FLOWERING TIME 8-9 WEEKS INDOOR 12-SEED PACK \$75	BC SWEET-TOOTH 90% INDICA 6-7 WEEKS 12-SEED PACK \$75	
BC HASH PLANT HYBRID 8 WEEKS 12-SEED PACK \$75 FEMINIZED \$125	WHITE WIDOW 75% INDICA 8-10 WEEKS 12-SEED PACK \$75 FEMINIZED \$125	BC KUSH 75% INDICA 8-9 WEEKS 12-SEED PACK \$75 FEMINIZED \$125	ANIMAL COOKIES HYBRID 9-10 WEEKS 12-SEED PACK \$90	
STRAWBERRY COUGH 75% SATIVA 9 WEEKS FEMINIZED \$125	SOCAL MASTER KUSH HYBRID 9-10 WEEKS 12-SEED PACK \$75 FEMINIZED \$125	NORTHERN LIGHTS 70% INDICA 7-8 WEEKS 12-SEED PACK \$75 FEMINIZED \$125	BLUE DREAM HYBRID 9-10 WEEKS 12-SEED PACK \$75	

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